Motor Racing Japanese Grand Prix

Perfect Finnish to the title

Alan Henry at Suzuka

MIKA Hakkinen of Finland clinched the 1998 Formula One world championship with a flawless flag-to-flag victory in the Japanese Grand Prix, a success which also gave the McLaren team its first constructors' title since the late Ayrton Senna secured his third and final crown in this race seven years ago.

For Michael Schumacher and the Ferrari team, their last-ditch efforts to secure a first drivers' title since 1979 ended in abject disaster.

The rule which states that any driver who causes a restart by making such an elementary error as stalling must go to the back of the grid was introduced to encourage adherence to unyielding television deadlines. In the past it has tended to penalise second-division competitors rather than the stars of the show.

But after Jarno Trulli's Prost was moved to the back of the grid as punishment for spoiling the first start with such a lapse, Schumacher had to take the same medicine following an identical transgression from pole position.

Schumacher recovered to third place before suffering a catastrophic tyre failure at 265 km/h on the start/finish straight after running over debris left by a collision between two slower cars.

In an episode frighteningly similar to Nigel Mansell's escape during the 1986 Australian Grand Prix, Schumacher controlled his wayward three-wheeler and deftly brought it to a halt at the side of the track. For the second successive season his chances of winning the title for Ferrari had been thwarted.

It was an unfortunate and embarrassing note on which to end Goodyear's 35-year association with motor racing's most senior category, as the tyre company withdrew from Formula One after last Sunday's race following a decision taken last year.

Watched approvingly by his mentor, manager and former world champion Keke Rosberg, the only other Finn to have won the F1 title, back in 1982, the 30-year-old Hakkinen dominated the race with unruffled composure.

"I don't know how to start explaining my feelings," he said. "It was easier than some of the races have been this year. I have been in much more difficult situations than at this grand prix, but obviously I was aware this morning of the pressure that was falling on me.

"It was disturbing my performance a little bit, which I would say is quite normal, but then I seemed to calm down quite a lot and it was quite easy to control the situation. But there is always one problem when you are leading easily like that — and it happened to me with about 10 laps to go — which is the tendency for your mind to start thinking about other things. I almost started whistling inside the car . . ."

For Hakkinen, victory represented just reward for a dogged and sometimes disheartening slog through from the ranks of the F1 also-rans, which he originally joined as a member of the Lotus team in 1991.

Two years later he signed as McLaren's official test driver rather than race for the French Ligier squad, and eventually gained promotion to the full-time race team after the IndyCar star Michael Andretti failed to master the complexities of F1 and withdrew from the series before the end of the 1993 season.

His success brought McLaren's tally of grand prix victories to 116 since the team began F1 racing in 1966, only three fewer than Ferrari, who have been competing since 1949.

Ferrari had hoped that Eddie Irvine might be able to play a tactical role in this event where Schumacher had to win without Hakkinen scoring any points from this final race. This was too much of a gamble and, although Irvine made up two places at the start, he simply could not keep pace with the McLaren.

David Coulthard finished third in the other McLaren-Mercedes with Damon Hill's Jordan-Honda forging a path ahead of Heinz-Harald Frentzen's Williams FW20 as they braked for the final chicane on the last lap. It was a bold slice of overtaking, but quite unnecessary.

Hill had it fixed in his mind that fourth was absolutely essential to ensure Jordan finished fourth in the constructors' championship. In fact, fifth would have been good enough, but Hill had seemingly ignored that instruction and muscled his way past the startled Williams driver.

Flying the flag . . . Hakkinen after his victory PHOTO: MICHAEL COOPER

Cryptic crossword by Rover

Across

1 Obstinate dog bite festered (7)
5 Schism, as Queen initially reforms English liturgy (7)
9 Wide-awake dealer tries holding it (5)
10 Wild steps made for sudden stock movements (9)
11 One to be chosen from plain and fancy tea (9)
12 Between morning, half-noon, and midnight (5)
13 Long for story about Fourth of June (5)
15 Lance laid carelessly caused delay (9)
18 Spin in deliveries is more important (9)
19 Daisy seen in place where Ayrshires go wandering (5)
21 See Cornish mystery tour-rl (5)
23 Queen's curator? (9)
25 Throw suspicion on pet I claim mischievous (9)
26 Daily recipe for health in the eye? (5)
27 He lands awkwardly for his first gift (7)
28 Utterly shy about dancing reel (7)

Down

1 Having arms spread by embracing (7)
2 Common stake produces fruit (9)
3 All make sounds like a toot (5)
4 Did away with fancy red caddis (9)
5 Rock scaled by Richter? (5)
6 Coming of William, say, in imitation (9)
7 Set for the Archers (5)
8 Designed as angel food in Italy (7)
14 Insomniacs shouldn't count sheep with these numbers (9)
16 They pay attention to 7 (9)
17 What's before you daily (9)
18 Most Richard Tauber records contain this bird (7)
20 Rye runs out where new grass grows (7)
22 Release a French writer (5)
23 Fine (Scottish) line for argument (5)
24 Remove monarch as head of England (5)

Last week's solution

Rugby League First Test: G Britain 16 New Zealand 22

Kiwis tame the Lions

Andy Wilson at the McAlpine Stadium

AS HIS nickname suggests, "Hollywood" Bill Harrigan is not a referee who blends into the background. Even at a low-key coaching session in Leeds late last month, the former Sydney policeman, who slicks back his bushy hair for matches these days, and has his own agent and fan club, sported an outrageous pair of leggings.

He was the centre of attention again at Huddersfield last Saturday, but the suggestion that he was responsible for Great Britain's defeat was wide of the mark.

Two Harrigan decisions came under the microscope. At the end of the first half, although the hooter had sounded, he allowed New Zealand's prop Joe Vagana to waltz through a British defence which was already thinking of their oranges.

Then, with Great Britain battering the Kiwi line, having fought back to 22-16 with seconds remaining, he turned down home claims for a penalty try when Robbie Paul tackled Keith Senior in mid-air. Harrigan did award a penalty, although there was at least a case for a penalty try.

Stacey Jones's intelligent kick behind the British defence set up the opening try for Stephen Kearney in virtually the first Kiwi attack, after 14 minutes. Then, after tries from Great Britain's dangerous left-wing pair of Senior and Paul Newlove had cancelled out Vagana's solo effort, the Paul brothers linked superbly for Jones to scamper over and regain the lead for New Zealand. The pass with which Kearney sent Robbie Paul over seven minutes from time was worthy of winning any Test.

There were no smiles among the Great Britain brains trust of Andy Goodway and Andy Farrell. "It was a game we should have won," they agreed, refusing to blame Harrigan.

The Lions ultimately paid the penalty for a wretched opening in which their attack looked hopelessly confused. That was partially understandable, after only four days working together since the Super League Grand Final. But the selection of Paul Sculthorpe, the St Helens back-row forward, at stand-off did not help.

Great Britain looked a much more potent team after the interval as the playmaking partnership of Farrell and Iestyn Harris began to fulfil its potential, with Tony Smith a revelation at scrum-half throughout. They can only improve for the second Test at Bolton on Saturday, and the series is set up nicely.

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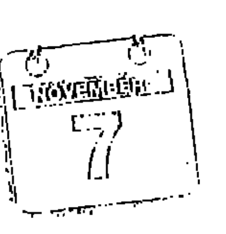
The Guardian Weekly

Vol 159, No 20
Week ending November 15, 1998

A tale of two American catastrophes



CRISIS IN WALL STREET:
A hedge fund totters and the West organises a $3.5 billion rescue package



CRISIS IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
Over 10,000 are dead, millions are homeless, and the West organises a $200 million rescue package





Traders on Wall Street caught up in September's dealing frenzy, left, while two-year-old Felix Silva cries at a Nicaragua shelter PHOTOGRAPHS: MITCH JACOBSON (left) and OSWALDO RIVAS

Larry Elliott

ALL the Masters of the Universe were there on the night of Wednesday, September 23. Gathered in the panelled elegance of the 10th floor boardroom of the Federal Reserve, 14 of Wall Street's élite were given their instructions by William McDonough.

The boss of the New York Fed put it simply: stump up $3.5 billion to bail out the teetering hedge fund, Long-Term Capital Management, or run the risk of what Bill Clinton has called "the biggest threat to the global financial system in 50 years".

There were no Masters of the Universe in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa this week. Just dead bodies piling up and a $2 billion dollar repair bill. Two weeks ago, when the worst flood in Central America for 200 years engulfed Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, President Clinton offered $2 million — less than one of Wall Street's big hitters could net in an average year.

Last week, 10 days after Hurricane Mitch had unleashed its deluge, the White House increased its offer. With more than 10,000 dead, thousands more missing, and 2 million made homeless, Mr Clinton ordered an extra $30 million from the defence budget to fly in troops to help with the emergency and $36 million for food, fuel and other aid.

This has been the story of two disasters, one averted and one real. In the first, the central bank of the world's most powerful country banged heads together to prevent the stupidity and greed of a hedge fund throwing the banking system into chaos. One of LTCM's bets was on the path of European long-term interest rates — a massive gamble that went spectacularly wrong when Russia defaulted. Whereas most homeowners in Britain can borrow only 2½ times their salary to buy a house, the people running LTCM had an exposure of $900 billion — 250 times the fund's capital base.

But once the scale of possible LTCM losses became known, the response was purposeful and determined. And it worked. All ideas that governments should not intervene in free markets were tossed out of the New York Fed's 10th floor windows as officials around the world thrashed out a rescue package.

For the past two weeks, hungry and ill people have been huddled in trees above the flood waters, tying their children to branches to stop them being swept away. In Honduras, the worst affected, almost 60 per cent of the country is under water, and 75 per cent of agriculture has been destroyed. In Nicaragua, thousands were swept away in the mudslide from the Casita crater collapse. At least half the country is severely affected by flooding.

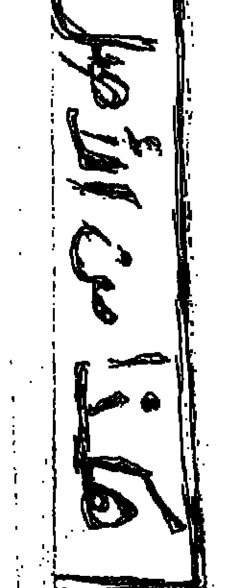
So far there has been no co-ordinated response from the international community. The World Bank has sent $15 million to Honduras and Nicaragua as immediate aid, and has started negotiations to convert $300 million allocated for relief projects.

By Monday night the European Union had pledged nearly $100 million in aid. There have been promises of help. There has been hand-wringing aplenty.

On Monday night the 10th floor boardroom at the New York Fed was bathed in darkness. The Masters of the Universe had gone home to enjoy their well-earned rest.

Apocalypse now, page 4

Austria	AS30	Malta	50c
Belgium	BF80	Netherlands	G 5
Denmark	DK17	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 14	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 600	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,600	Switzerland	SF 3.80



Hypocrites swell ranks of Pinochet apologists

ACCORDING to Charles Krauthammer, General Pinochet's arrest is "a blow for the most ideologically selective justice, and the rankest hypocrisy" (November 1).

The thread of his "argument" — little more than a succession of bitter innuendoes — appears to be that since the likes of Jiang, Castro, Arafat, Franco and De Klerk have not yet had their collars felt, it is hypocritical to arrest Pinochet or to cheer this rare display of due process relatively unhampered by politics. I for one will cheer on regardless, smugly aware that indulging in even the rankest hypocrisy is a small sin compared with systematic torture, mass murder and the terrorisation of an entire nation.

Perhaps the Pinochet case will set a trend. Henceforth, perhaps the perpetrators of atrocities will be held accountable for their crimes regardless of whether they are, or subsequently become, senior officials of state. Perhaps the demands of justice will take precedence over those of diplomacy and *realpolitik*? Now seems as good a time as any to launch this new world order, and the Pinochet case would set an excellent precedent. Krauthammer would rather this didn't happen. He condones the example of post-Franco Spain, which he characterises as "amnesia" and "turning a blind eye on the past" for "the sake of social peace".

The only exception, his simple rule of thumb states, is "when you win total victory over an evil regime". Under this logic, if the Allies had merely fought the Nazis to a stand-off, leaving Hitler in power, we would have had no business arresting the retired Führer or his cronies during a London sojourn in the 1960s for complicity in the deaths of millions of civilians in concentration camps.

Essentially, Krauthammer implies that the justification for pursuing the prime architects of the Holocaust rests on the fact that "we" won a total victory over the evil Nazis. That is an insult to the victims and their families and a very dangerous line of reasoning. There can be no international amnesia or amnesty for people who commit atrocities on the scale of Pinochet's butchery, not to mention the Holocaust, Soviet and Chinese mass killings or the more recent genocides in East Timor, Cambodia, Rwanda and the Balkans. If nations cannot bring their own butchers to justice, international institutions must be fashioned to do the job.

Krauthammer's sneering at "armchair moralists" and the European left is a pathetic and mean-spirited attempt to obscure the role of his corporate masters in creating and supporting tyrants such as Pinochet, training and arming their torturers and exploiting their subject peoples for profit. Like his rule of thumb, it's very simple. If Pinochet were to go on trial, United States foreign policy would be in the dock. And that might expose some very rank hypocrisy indeed.
Tim Groves,
Kyoto, Japan

ANDREW RAWNSLEY (Weasel words from Pinochet's apologists, November 1) answers very nicely the pure right ideology of Charles Krauthammer. The real hypocrisy is that of governments who sign international agreements about human rights and crimes against humanity, and then do nothing to enforce them.

It would be nice if all those responsible for mass murder and torture could be made to pay for their crimes. Unfortunately justice doesn't work that way; it is rather like a symphony, composed one note at a time. Pinochet's arrest is one such note, beautifully clear; no matter what, it will be part of the symphony of justice for ever.
Tom Edmonds,
Bromont, Quebec, Canada

SHOULD not the United Nations draw up an international list of *personae non gratae*, putting undesirable rulers on notice that they will be liable to prosecution should they stray from their own shores?

This might end the nauseating notion of characters such as Mobutu and Amin spending their ill-gotten gains in Harrods.
Peter Whitehead,
London

US democracy a media myth

THE biennial elections in the United States are cause for a great deal of hot air and a tremendous expenditure of time, money and resources. One thing that the two parties (Democrats and Republicans, who have instituted themselves into permanency) have in common is the arrogant claim that this exercise is the best demonstration of the world's "greatest democracy" in action. And, sadly, the minority of the citizenry that even cares enough to vote buys this hook, line and sinker.

Other than at the local levels — and even here it is the exception rather than the rule — the elections across the country are neither truly representative nor participatory. Consider the following facts:

❑ A candidate needs $1 million or more in major state and national races in order to be heard and seen;
❑ Only two parties have the significant wherewithal to field candidates. This can hardly represent the aspirations and hopes of the diversity of people in this country. In particular, there is no voice that speaks for the poor, the minorities and the working class because the candidates, by the previous fact, are from and for the upper classes;
❑ Any meaningful difference between the two parties erodes as one goes from local to state to national to international issues because of the absurd desire for bipartisanship;
❑ Less than 50 per cent of the electorate participates in the elections, and even fewer from the minority communities. This is not surprising given the Hobson's choice presented to the voters;
❑ The elected leaders are mainly beholden to their rich contributors, special interests which influence voting blocs and ultra-right organisations such as the National Rifle Association, the Cuban-American National Foundation or the American-Israeli Political Action Committee.

This is the farce that continues in this country, and that is proclaimed from the roof tops by its elected plutocrats to be the finest example of all society. The mass media perpetuates this myth, glorifies it and recommends it to the rest of the world. Not surprising, considering that they come from the same ranks.
(Dr) N Sadanand,
Central Connecticut State University,
New Britain, Connecticut, USA

Working women poorly rewarded

IT IS good that the Guardian Weekly is allowing some space for the issue of gender discrimination (Jobs for the boys? October 25). One does not have to be a rampant feminist these days to be concerned; one simply has to have worked in the commercial world for a reasonable period.

Indeed, the position of women these days seems increasingly like that of the horse in Animal Farm. We go on thinking that if we just work harder our rewards will come. Instead, some of us will end up in the knacker's yard, more elegantly described as victims of the glass ceiling.

I have heard it suggested that women are not as good at negotiating their salaries as men. Funnily enough, the best explanation I can come up with derives from something my mother said to me when I was young. When I asked her why I was always sent to the greengrocers (in those days children could go out alone and families had accounts with local shops) and not my brothers, she explained that I "made less fuss" when asked to go.

This was borne out recently when I discovered that I am earning 37 per cent less (after tax) than the other (male) expatriates I work with. They received substantial pay rises on the basis that a new expatriate was being recruited at a much higher salary and they might "make a fuss" if they were not on equal packages.

I am a solicitor with a PhD in psychology from the University of Cambridge and 10 years of financial services' experience. I do not have children, and work is a central part of my life. It would be hard to argue that I am not amply qualified for the kind of work I do, and yet it appears that I cannot hope to earn as much as my male colleagues.

As I get older and head towards that other problem (ageism) I can only hope that my three nieces (aged 13, 11 and 4) will be as baffled as I am by my experiences when they are my age, not because they cannot explain gender discrimination, but because they have simply not come across it.
(Dr) Carole A Cotter,
Gibraltar and London

Briefly

THE most dangerous feature of Lord Jenkins's proposals (Jenkins redraws the political map, November 8) is that up to 120 MPs would be selected not on a constituency basis, under the present FPTP system, but from lists drawn up by a committee mostly manned by those subservient to the party leadership.

As the selection of candidates for next year's European Parliament elections shows, it would mean that anyone one inch left of centre would have no chance.
Frank Allaun,
Manchester

I THOROUGHLY understand the reasoning behind Roy Jenkins's proposals to reform Britain's voting system, but if they led to the messiness of the Australian political system they would do harm. Tony Blair will be very wise to take his time.
(Prof) Edward Black,
North Manly, NSW, Australia

JENNIFER BALFOUR'S "Letter from Uzbekistan" (November 1) is marvellous and is the stuff of which long series are made. I can't be the only reader who is dying to follow the experiences of this intrepid girl: what on earth will she make of "civilisation"? Will she survive it unscathed? Will she return to take up her life as before like the Fuegans of the Beagle? Please can you lean on Ms Balfour to continue what she has begun? Better still: might Zamira write her own Letter from England?
Pat Anderson,
Richmond, North Yorks

I WAS surprised that John Ryle (The trouble with Americans, October 18) did not offer the obvious substitute for "American" to describe US citizens. "User", though inelegant, seems remarkably appropriate.
Trevor Dandy,
Winnipeg, Canada

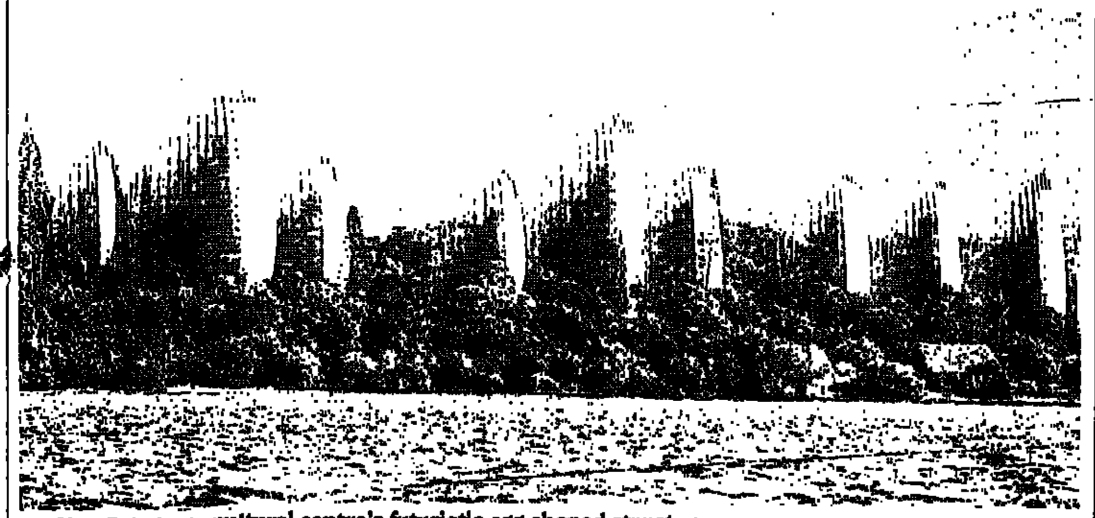
I WAS in a Chinese restaurant in Madrid the other day, and an Italian businessman's mobile phone kept ringing at length to the tune of "Scotland The Brave". Is this what globalisation is all about, or is it just that the SNP is more powerful than I thought?
Guy Hill,
Madrid, Spain

CONGRATULATIONS to Senator John Glenn on an achievement which proves the resilience and capacity of the elderly. Use our experience. Don't write us off.
A T Goodman (aged 79),
Southport, Merseyside

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The New Caledonia cultural centre's futuristic egg-shaped structures PHOTOGRAPH: P A PANTZ

Cultural centre symbolises island's birth

Christopher Zinn in New Caledonia

MORE than 70 per cent of New Caledonians backed an historic referendum last Sunday to grant the formerly troubled French Pacific territory more autonomy from Paris, before a final vote is taken on independence.

The decision could also be seen as a vote of confidence in the most spectacular structure to be built in the South Pacific since the Sydney Opera House — the Centre Culturel Tjibaou, which opened recently near the territory's capital, Noumea.

The futuristic and traditional structure was a $58 million peace offering from the French government to the Kanak islanders who waged a struggle against settlers between 1984 and 1988 in which almost 50 people died.

The complex, based on tribal buildings and designed by a leading Italian architect, Renzo Piano, was named after the Kanak leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou, who was assassinated in 1989 by separatist extremists after signing a pact to avoid a civil war.

The Kanaks of New Caledonia speak 28 different languages and have seen their traditional culture and population growth stunted by French colonisation.

The original accords signed between Tjibaou's pro-independence Front de la Libération Nationale des Kanakes Socialists party, and the French loyalist Reassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la Republique group in 1988 were meant to correct the social and economic disparity between the Kanaks and the Europeans, who make up 34 per cent of the population.

Last Sunday's referendum was the start of a 20-year timetable in the transition to what is described as a shared sovereignty.

France will now cede a range of powers to the islands before the final vote.

French right up in arms over new law

Jon Henley in Paris

A NEW expression has entered the French language. It is only a joke at present, but soon it will have a more serious meaning. "Voulez-vous *pacser* avec moi?" giggling teenagers are asking their partners. Roughly it translates: "Would you like to enter into a Civil Solidarity Pact with me?"

The Civil Solidarity Pact — better known by its French acronym Pacs — is a thoroughly modern piece of legislation introduced by a Socialist-led government keen to prove its leftwing credentials. Some fear it will change society more radically than any bill since the Abortion Act a quarter of a century ago.

Currently midway through the National Assembly, Pacs has been the subject of some of the most violent scenes parliament has witnessed in decades. Originally inspired by gay rights campaigners, it will give legal recognition to cohabiting couples of whatever sex, allowing them to file joint tax returns, share common property rights and enjoy the same social welfare and inheritance advantages as families.

It will in effect sanction gay marriage, argue its opponents, which include the Catholic Church and the conservative opposition. The latter has tabled nearly 1,000 amendments.

Speaking for them, Christine Boutin, a Gaullist deputy who filibustered against the bill for five-and-a-half hours, said it opened the door to moral decline and represented an unholy attack on the family, the institution of marriage, the child and the state itself. "The Pacs", she declared, "is a disgrace to this country."

Others have gone further. An ultra-conservative group called the Future of Culture has bombarded the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, with 60,000 postcards saying the plan amounts to "a choice for a decadent society that will destroy the remains of civilisation still separating us from barbarism".

Fundamentalist Catholics are praying in churches and convents for the bill's defeat, and posters in the Paris Metro warn of the family's imminent collapse.

That is not, however, the way its supporters see it. Pacs — they argue — is a long-overdue recognition of modern life in France, a once deeply Catholic country where more than 40 per cent of children are now born out of wedlock.

The government says the law will help not only young couples, gay and straight, but also senior citizens or relatives who, for example, decide to pool their resources.

Unmarried couples living together in France currently get a raw deal. They are essentially treated as individuals, meaning they pay substantially more tax than a married couple and can also face severe problems of legal recognition with pensions, inheritance and life insurance if they separate or if one of the partners dies. Pacs could cost the government $1.5 billion a year in lost tax.

According to a recent poll, 70 per cent of the population favours the plan for heterosexuals, with 49 per cent support for homosexuals.

"Pacs is not about marriage, homosexual or heterosexual," insists the justice minister, Elisabeth Guigou. "We are simply talking about a contract which will give legal security to people who cannot or do not want to get married."

Blair backs family, page 10

Carlos on hunger strike

CARLOS the Jackal, once the world's most wanted terrorist after a string of sensational attacks around the world during the seventies and early eighties, on Tuesday was on the sixth day of a potentially life-threatening hunger strike, *writes Jon Henley in Paris.*

He has refused all food and liquids and, according to his lawyer, is prepared to go "to the fateful end".

President Jacques Chirac has been warned that Carlos is prepared to die unless he is taken out of solitary confinement in the Paris jail where he is serving a life sentence for murder. His lawyer, François Vuillemin, said that he was already weak and dehydrated but remained "completely determined".

"No prisoner in republican and democratic France has had to undergo such extreme moral torture," Mr Vuillemin wrote to the president. "This man has been buried alive. Without imploring, since he is not one to beg, he appeals through me to your conscience, Mr President, to stop this measure now, and return to him the dignity of a man deprived of his liberty."

Carlos, born Ilich Ramirez Sanchez in Venezuela 49 years ago, has been held in total isolation at the capital's La Santé jail since August 16, 1994, two days after his arrest and abduction from the Sudan by French secret service agents.

Sentenced to life in prison late last year for the murder of two French policemen in 1975, the former pro-Palestinian terrorist is blamed for more than 80 deaths and hundreds of injuries around the world.

Police testimony dents sex case against Anwar

John Gittings and John Aglionby

THE prosecution case in Malaysia against the former deputy prime minister, Anwar Ibrahim, wobbled seriously last week with the release of a special branch report saying he had been the victim of a smear campaign.

The report, submitted to the prime minister, Mahathir Mohamad, in August last year, said that sexual allegations against Mr Anwar were "baseless, and more dependent on imagination and assumption".

The prosecution's case — now being loudly backed in public statements by Dr Mahathir — is that Mr Anwar was guilty of "sexual misconduct", and had sought to cover it up by instructing the special branch to "neutralise" his accusers.

But after a week of evidence from the special branch chief, Mohamad Said Awang, many Malaysians will wonder which version is true. His credibility was damaged on Thursday last week when he admitted that he might lie to the court if told to do so by government ministers.

The report of August 18, 1997 detailed the motives which had led Ummi Hafilda Ali, the sister of Mr Anwar's private secretary, and his former driver, Azizan Abu Bakar, to accuse him of illegal sexual acts.

Ms Ummi is said to have levelled the charge because she suspected that her sister-in-law was having an affair with Mr Anwar. The driver is also said to have been antagonised by the sister-in-law's "arrogant attitude".

The report says, without going into detail, that "there are indications that there exists a certain group that may have their own agenda ... to smear [Mr Anwar]."

Mr Anwar's defence team claims that a much more specific report, dated two weeks later, identified senior political figures as belonging to this group, including Dr Mahathir's close associate and economic adviser, Daim Zainuddin.

The judge, Augustine Paul, has asked the prosecution to try to obtain a copy of this second report.

On Monday Mr Mohamad Said told the court he could not remember a second report. But a source close to the defence team said after the court adjourned: "Anwar remembers seeing the second report, although he was never allowed to keep a copy of it. We are determined to find it and prove his innocence."

The surfacing of this political [illegible], whatever the circumstances in which the reports were produced, will confirm the view of many Malaysians that the case is about power struggles in the ruling élite, and not about sexual behaviour between consenting adults.

Only four charges of corruption — involving Mr Anwar's alleged attempt to force his accusers to retract their allegations of sexual misconduct — are currently being heard.

Another charge of corruption, and five counts of alleged sodomy, are unlikely to be heard until the beginning of the new year. After that, Malaysia's attorney-general has suggested that more charges may be preferred.

Yugoslavia 'a fugitives haven'

Chris Bird in Belgrade

YUGOSLAVIA is a haven for suspected war criminals hiding from international justice, a senior United States official said this week, adding that any attempt to shelter those indicted of war crimes was "futile".

Western states have used demands on Kosovo to pressure Yugoslavia's president, Slobodan Milosevic, to allow jurisdiction for the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague to investigate crimes and arrest suspects in present-day Yugoslavia.

The tribunal and the US are pushing Mr Milosevic to hand over three Serbs who they say are in Yugoslavia. The court issued arrest warrants in 1996 for army officers Mile Mrksic, Miroslav Radic and Veselin Sljivancanin, known as the "Vukovar Three", for the slaughter of 260 unarmed men in the Croatian town of Vukovar in 1991.

David Scheffer, US ambassador at large for war crimes issues, said Yugoslavia was advertising itself to the world as a "haven" for war crimes indictees from The Hague.

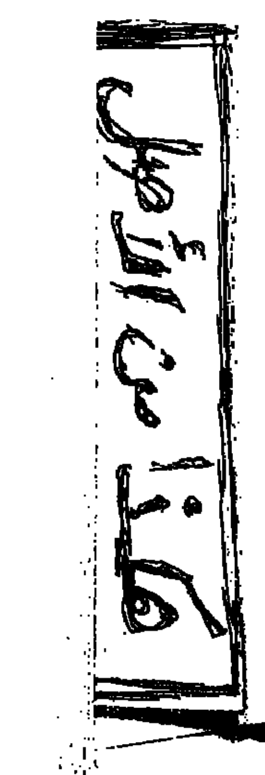
"It would not surprise me if there were other indictees enjoying similar sanctuary by the Yugoslav authorities," he said when asked if former Bosnian Serb president, Radovan Karadzic, and his army commander, General Ratko Mladic, might be in Serbia.

"No one should be in doubt that Karadzic and Mladic will be brought to The Hague," he said. "It is our hope that Yugoslavia recognises the futility of providing sanctuary to anyone indicted for war crimes."

Earlier Louise Arbour, the tribunal's chief prosecutor, was denied permission to travel with 10 others to investigate alleged war crimes in Serbia's mainly ethnic Albanian province of Kosovo.

Mr Milosevic has refused to hand over the Vukovar Three and has reneged on a promise made to the US negotiator, Richard Holbrooke, to grant UN investigators access to Kosovo. [illegible] Milosevic-Holbrooke talks had led to confusion about the war crimes tribunal's jurisdiction, which she said was clear. A UN Security Council resolution in 1993 gave the tribunal jurisdiction across all of former Yugoslavia.

"We've already had investigative missions in Kosovo; they weren't covert, they've issued visas in the past," Ms Arbour said. "The genesis of this present blunder is down to the Milosevic-Holbrooke deal. It was reported that Milosevic didn't concede the court jurisdiction — the rhetoric was upgraded by Belgrade to say we had no jurisdiction over Kosovo."



Jerusalem bomb puts accord at risk

David Sharrock in Jerusalem

PRESIDENT Clinton last week urged Israel not to stall the recently agreed land-for-security deal after two Palestinian car bombers blew themselves up as they tried to kill Israeli shoppers at Jerusalem's central market.

The blast injured 21 people and pushed the revived Middle East peace process back to the brink of collapse.

The Israeli cabinet, which was meeting as the bombers' car was torn apart in the blast, immediately suspended work on passing the Wye summit agreement until it was convinced that Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority was "taking decisive steps in a determined war on the terrorist organisations".

Israel's justice minister, Tsahi Hanegbi, said the attack was almost certainly staged by the Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad. Two telephone calls had earlier claimed the responsibility for the Islamist militant party, Hamas.

The bombing happened at the Mahane Yehuda market, where 16 months ago 15 people were killed by Hamas suicide bombers. Witnesses said a red Fiat 127 approached the market's main entrance and then blew up, throwing its two occupants into the street.

Police said the car was carrying two crude bombs. The force of the blast was funnelled upwards. At a stall only metres away, stacks of eggs were left undamaged.

Mr Clinton called the Wye accord "the only answer to this act of criminal terror".

Appealing for prayers for the injured, he said the agreement he helped mediate last month "is the best way to protect the safety of the Israeli people, the best way to achieve the aspirations of the Palestinians".

James Rubin, spokesman for the US secretary of state Madeleine Albright, said more than a brief delay in implementing the accord would encourage extremists. "We cannot let the extremists, the enemies of the peace process, destroy the hopes of Israelis and Palestinians."

Palestinian reaction to the attack was swift. President Arafat's spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdainah, said: "We condemn this attack regardless of who is responsible for it or which side the extremists are from. We hope this won't become an excuse to sabotage the agreement."

Israel radio quoted an unnamed high-level Israeli official saying the cabinet had decided to release public tenders for construction on Har Homa, the controversial hillside housing project near Jerusalem.

The report was denied, but a cabinet statement said that in the wake of the bombing: "Israel will act to strengthen Jerusalem and defend the security of its citizens."

Strengthening Jerusalem is a phrase used to justify the construction of Jewish settlements ringing the city.

The only Israeli minister to oppose a further suspension of the Wye agreement was the interior minister, Avigdor Kalahani, who arrived at the scene shortly after the attack.

According to the Wye timetable, Israel is supposed to begin withdrawing from West Bank territory this month. But the cabinet has raised a new objection and is demanding that the 900-member Palestinian National Council votes to abolish clauses in its charter calling for the destruction of Israel.

Comment, page 12

Apocalypse now in fragile democracies

Phil Gunson in Tegucigalpa, Robin McKie and Lucy Johnston

MEXICO
6 dead, thousands evacuated

BELIZE
Tens of thousands fled homes

HONDURAS
17,400 dead or missing

GUATEMALA
440 dead or missing, 77,900 evacuated

NICARAGUA
4,300 dead or missing
725,000 homeless

EL SALVADOR
370 dead or missing
50,000 homeless

COSTA RICA
7 dead

THE DISASTER destroyed almost the entire centre of the city, burying thousands. Millions of dollars in aid were blatantly embezzled by the president. So great was the outrage that within a few years an armed uprising overthrew his regime; not long afterwards he was assassinated in exile when an irate citizen destroyed his Mercedes with a bazooka.

The man was Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza; the decade the seventies; and the spark that led to revolution was the earthquake that levelled the capital, Managua.

Today, in the aftermath of the region's devastating hurricane, the debate over the how and who of reconstruction is already under way. And if revolution seems to be off the agenda, the fear of a repetition of past mistakes is palpable.

Indeed, it is hard to deny its inevitability. In a volatile world, this thin strip of land seems destined to erupt with an awful regularity and with desperate consequences.

The isthmus of Central America was created a mere 2 million years ago when the tectonic plate carrying South America crunched into its North American equivalent, separating Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Ever since, Central America has been paying the meteorological, geological and political consequences.

For a start, the region straddles two of the world's most disruptive weather systems: El Niño in the Pacific and the hurricane factories of the Caribbean. It also stands over faultlines that have produced a series of cataclysmic earthquakes.

Worst of all, though, the region is the conduit that links the world's richest nation, the United States, with some of the poorest, in South America. "So far from God, so close to the United States," the saying goes. The political fallout has, not surprisingly, been dreadful and has only been intensified by Hurricane Mitch.

"Washington never cared about us as a country, only as a territory to be occupied," said political analyst Victor Meza.

"By the nineties it no longer cared about us even as a territory, and Honduras had to begin living in the real world." And now the real world has revealed how just awful it can be.

Then there is Nicaragua. Victims there have accused their president, Arnoldo Alemán, of being slow to help some of the worst-hit regions because they had supported left-wing Sandinistas, the former rebels who governed through the eighties but whose regime was constantly undermined by the US.

"The government has not sent anything. The only ones who are helping us are the Sandinistas," Felicita Zeledón, the Posoltega mayor said. One refugee, 60-year-old Elba Josefina Aguilera, agreed: "From the government we haven't received anything," she said. "It's political because the mayor is a Sandinista."

To confirm this point, crowds of flood victims jeered Alemán, calling him a murderer, when he visited nearby León last week.

The issue is therefore a simple one, according to Meza. "Do we reconstruct the country — or construct a new country? I believe we have to reconstruct, and transform."

Hurricane Mitch dumped the equivalent of an entire year's rainfall on Honduras in just one week, setting the country's economy back almost two generations in a matter of days. "We have lost 30 years' worth of infrastructure and productive capacity," said economist Efrain Díaz.

Joaquín Cuadra, commander of the Nicaraguan army which is co-ordinating the relief effort, says "the weather is still so bad we simply can't get access". Food cannot be brought in fast enough to make up the loss, and 70 per cent of crops have been destroyed.

In Honduras, the government puts the cost of repairing roads and bridges alone at $2 billion. An Inter-american Development Bank (IDB) mission says another $2 billion is needed to compensate for lost production, mainly in agriculture and fisheries.

Yet the nation's projected budget for 1999 is only $500 million. Huge amounts of foreign aid will therefore need to flow through institutions whose probity is, to say the least, questionable.

IN A RECENT survey measuring perceptions of corruption among private business leaders in 89 countries around the world, Honduras was ranked third.

"Is anything going to change?" a senior development agency official asked rhetorically. "We certainly would like it to, but with the class of politicians we have, I doubt it."

However, Meza points out that Honduras today is not the Honduras of 1974, when Hurricane Fifi struck. Today there are independent prosecutors, a police force in the service of the judiciary, and people are actually prosecuted for corruption.

Nevertheless poverty has also increased in both absolute and relative terms, and as always the poor have suffered most. The death toll may easily top 20,000, although many bodies will never be found. An unknown number will decompose under the thick, brown mud, their presence betrayed only by the sweet stench of death.

Given the extent of the cataclysm, the area may well "take 10 to 15 years to fully recover," the former US president, Jimmy Carter, said last week after visiting the region. He urged that the two nations be given preferential trade agreements, foreign debt forgiveness and direct massive aid, a proposal motivated — at least in part — by guilt.

"I don't think there's any doubt that the [US-financed] Contra war was an affliction on Nicaragua for which my own nation has to be partly responsible," he added.

Such is the scale of the tragedy, according to one aid worker, that the relief effort is the equivalent of "using a sticking plaster to stop bleeding from a gun shot wound to the heart".

The idea that the region's $4 billion debts to the West should be scrapped has at least united both left and right. Even the rightwing Alemán has called for debt forgiveness, and sought to enlist his opposite number, Carlos Flores, in a joint approach to creditors.

"The country does not have the capacity to pay the foreign debt," said Efrain Díaz. "It couldn't pay before Mitch, so I don't see how it can pay now."

Every day Nicaragua and Honduras spend a total of $2 million on repayments to creditors. Britain receives about $170 million a year. These countries spend three to four times as much on debt as on health and education.

Hurricane Mitch may therefore be a turning point for the region. If opportunities are seized while the world's attention is on an area that has been off the agenda for nearly a decade, some good may come of this tragedy.

But if the only ones seizing the opportunity are greedy politicians and corrupt military officers, then an already desperately poor and recently unstable part of the world can look forward to yet another generation lost to violence and malnutrition.

There could be no greater test of the fledgling political institutions that have struggled into life over the past 10 years. Nothing less than the future of democracy in Central America is now at stake. — *The Observer*

The Week

PROSPECTS of a deal to push forward worldwide action on global warming looked thin, after politicians meeting in Buenos Aires played down the idea that reductions in carbon dioxide emissions can begin soon.

Comment, page 12

WASHINGTON announced a record reward of $5 million for the arrest of Osama bin Laden, in connection with acts of anti-American terrorism.

IRAQ rejected a new United Nations Security Council resolution condemning its decision to stop co-operating with weapons inspectors, saying it was imposed by the United States and Britain.

RWANDA's military leader, Paul Kagame, admitted that his troops are supporting rebels trying to oust the Congolese President Laurent Kabila.

A PEACEFUL solution to the violence in Spain's Basque country moved closer when the prime minister, José María Aznar, said he was willing to talk to the separatist group ETA.

PRESIDENT Clinton was questioned for 90 minutes by FBI officials, as part of an inquiry into the financing of his 1996 re-election campaign.

VETERAN astronaut John Glenn, aged 77, returned to Earth in the space shuttle Discovery, after spending 10 days in space.

INDONESIA'S former president Suharto was accused of being behind riots that rocked Jakarta and other cities in May, according to a report by an official fact-finding team.

THE former wife of the last Gucci to head the globally renowned fashion firm has been given a 29-year jail sentence for orchestrating his murder.

CHILE recalled its ambassador to Spain in protest at Madrid's decision to request the extradition of General Augusto Pinochet from Britain.

Extradition threat, page 12

JEAN Marais, one of France's best-loved film actors, has died at the age of 84.

ANC draws fire over smoking ban

Alex Duval Smith in Johannesburg

SOUTH AFRICAN moves to introduce some of the world's toughest anti-smoking laws have brought the government into head-on conflict with the tobacco companies and left much of the country sceptical that anyone will obey the legislation.

Under the Tobacco Products Control Amendment Bill, passed in parliament in Cape Town last week, all tobacco advertising and smoking in public places will be banned. The restrictions will affect up to 7 million South African smokers.

Once passed by the upper house, the National Council of Provinces, the legislation will make South Africa the first developing country, and only the 23rd country in the world, to have a complete or near-complete ban on tobacco advertising.

But tobacco company executives, who claim the ban on advertising is an unconstitutional infringement of free speech, are threatening to challenge the bill in court.

Steven Jurgens, managing director of British American Tobacco, which with Rothmans International has 90 per cent of the South African market, described as "kangaroo justice" the rapid manner in which the African National Congress pushed the bill through.

"We reserve the right to take legal action. A strong option will be to take the health minister to [the constitutional] court," Mr Jurgens said. "The discussions have been one-sided. The industry was just informed of what the department of health planned to do."

The high court dismissed an earlier action by tobacco companies to gain access to the department of health documents that were used to draft the bill.

The passage of the tobacco bill — 213 to 106 votes — was a victory for the beleaguered health minister, Nkosazana Zuma, who has faced criticism over many of her policies.

Last month she was featured in a cartoon in a pornographic magazine, in which her head was superimposed on a urinal and accompanied by the label: "underpaid domestic worker". The image was deemed racist and the magazine was removed from sale.

Race arguments have been employed against the bill. Sporting groups claim the advertising ban will end efforts to develop sport in mainly black areas.

The tobacco industry argues that the ban will lead to 15,000 job losses, worsening unemployment, already running at 30 per cent.

The planned law bans all tobacco advertising and sponsorship. Even advertisements for holidays or products such as drinks would not be allowed to show people smoking.

The maximum fine for smoking at work or in public places would be 200 rand ($32). Advertising violations would generate fines of up to 200,000 rand.

Moni Ngobeni, lighting up after an overnight coach ride from Cape Town said: "We are not very good at obeying laws in this country, so why should we start now? After all the stupid laws we put up with during apartheid, South Africa is not a place where there is a tradition of obeying the government."

Whether MPs will stick to the new law is questionable. Just before the vote in parliament last week, a group of them rushed out of the chamber for a smoke break.

Tobacco 'pushers', page 11

Dhaka killers to face firing squad

Arshad Mahmud in Dhaka and Suzanne Goldenberg

TWENTY-THREE years after a murder that has haunted Bangladesh, a judge this week sentenced 15 former army officers to death by firing squad for killing the country's founder, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and most of his family.

"They deserve no mercy," Judge Kazi Golam Rasul said as he read out his 171-page judgment to a packed court in Dhaka. "They not only shot and killed the president and his family but have shown arrogance after the killings. They should be executed publicly."

Only two of the condemned, including a retired colonel who led the plot, Faruk Rahman, are in custody. The rest are in hiding overseas. Four others, including a former junior information minister, were acquitted.

As the verdict was read out, thousands of Sheikh Mujib's followers danced in the streets, shouting "justice has prevailed". For the slain leader's daughter, Bangladesh's prime minister Sheikh Hasina, it was a moment of contemplation.

"The nation will be cleansed of a terrible sin when the sentence is carried out," she said at the three-storey grey house in Dhaka that was her childhood home and the scene of the murder of her entire extended family, barring one sister.

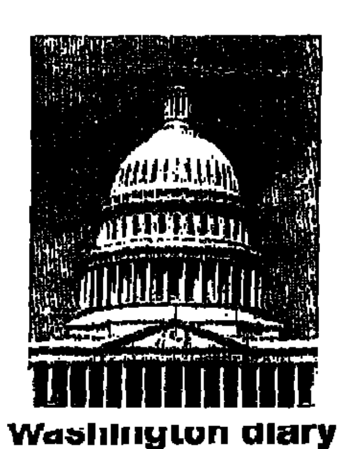
The conspirators have appeared on television claiming that they saved Bangladesh from tyranny. Months before his death, Sheikh Rahman had imposed one-party rule, and his critics accused him of corruption.

But Sheikh Hasina has insisted her father would have returned democratic rule. Since coming to power two years ago, she has made it her mission to punish his killers, and excavate a past that had been all but expunged from official history.

Three years ago she turned the family home into a museum, and 2,000 people a day now gaze reverently at the bloodstains and the bullet holes on the stairwell where the president fell. A sign invites tourists to examine pieces of her mother's brain embedded in the ceiling. Sheikh Hasina's youngest brother, Russell, who was 10, and a pregnant cousin, were also killed.

The accused are almost certain to appeal, and it could take years before the sentence is carried out.

Newt's departure leaves bitter taste



Washington diary

Martin Kettle

NINE years ago, a then unknown Republican congressman from Georgia launched a crusade against the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Jim Wright of Texas. Against the advice of his party colleagues, and to the unforgiving anger of the Democrats, the man from Georgia forced a series of ethics allegations to a congressional inquiry, which in turn compelled Speaker Wright to resign. In his valedictory speech, Wright turned on his relentless pursuer. "Mindless cannibalism", he said, had taken over in American politics.

Well, as a motherly grand juror said when she tried to comfort a weeping Monica Lewinsky in a Washington courthouse earlier this year, what goes around comes around. On Friday last week, that same Georgia congressman resigned as Speaker too, just like Wright before him. And, in a conference call with some of the people he had previously regarded as his own closest allies, he spoke bitterly of the Republican conservatives who had blackmailed him into quitting. They were, he announced, "cannibals".

In his political career, Newt Gingrich lived by the sword and died by the sword. That career ended last week in the kind of ruthless and unsentimental piece of political arithmetic that was both Gingrich's strength and his weakness. He added up the votes and saw that he would lose. So, with an equally characteristic petulance, Gingrich resigned not just as Speaker but also from Congress itself, to which he had been re-elected — with a record share of the poll — less than 72 hours previously.

It was, said a New York Times editorial, a stunning moment in American politics, and for once the overused adjective seems appropriate. For this is truly a turning point, not merely for the party battle of the Clinton years, but even more for the future of the Republican party, and above all for rightwing politics in the modern world.

Gingrich himself would not demur from seeing his fall in both global and epochal terms. For few politicians of our era have had a more explicit — some may say a more deluded — sense of their own historic significance than Gingrich. This is the man who proudly delighted in his claim to be famous in Mongolia, who described himself as "a revolutionary", and who looked a reporter in the eye on the eve of his 1994 triumph and announced "I think I am a transformational figure". Clutching his Contract With America in his fist, he told the American people, "We are going to change the world".

Gingrich has always made his claim on history to the descant of his own bungling. He is half Napoleon, half Homer Simpson. When Gingrich shut down the government in 1995, Bill Clinton, in some respects his *doppelgänger*, drew the Speaker on and then cut him to pieces. When Gingrich fastened on to the Lewinsky scandal as his chosen issue for the rematch, Clinton adopted a rope-a-dope strategy favoured by the ageing Muhammad Ali, waiting until Gingrich exhausted himself before delivering the knock-out punch.

From beginning to end, the orchestration of the impeachment inquiry and this year's mid-term election was Gingrich's campaign. Rooted in a revolutionary culture that spurns compromise, his ambitious aim, once he had decided on it in the spring, was nothing less than to bring Clinton down.

To that end Gingrich personally dictated the whole impeachment timetable on Capitol Hill this autumn, publishing the Starr report and then the Clinton video, driving his party to vote for the impeachment inquiry as the curtain-raising event of the election season. Lacking sufficient Senate votes to convict Clinton on a purely partisan basis, Gingrich staked everything on redressing the imbalance through voter power.

Little more than a week beforehand, the Republican commander-in-chief launched a final offensive in an election campaign whose focused purpose was to dislodge Clinton's grip on the presidency. According to Gingrich's war plan, the November 3 election would provide the extra congressional votes, the popular electoral mandate and the political momentum that would finally drive his great rival from office. Campaigning on the frontlines, fundraising across the nation, and rarely returning to Georgia, Gingrich gambled on the impeachment issue in the final days of the election, pitching $10 million worth of anti-Clinton television ads at viewer-voters in the two dozen key states and congressional districts where the election would be decided.



The result, like Waterloo, was a damn close-run thing. Overall, very little changed in these mid-term elections. The balance of power in the House, the Senate and among the nation's 50 governors, remains basically the same. And yet enough changed in this war of position for Clinton, whose party won fewer votes, fewer seats and fewer states than Gingrich's, to emerge triumphant.

It bears repeating, if only to prevent the 1998 mid-terms being falsely described as "a Democratic victory", that it was the Republican party which won on November 3. Not only did the Republicans win but they won for the third time in a row. A comparison of today's electoral map with that following the first Clinton victory year of 1992 shows that the 1990s have been a decade of great Republican success.

But this year's victory was pyrrhic, because Gingrich had staked all on securing Republican gains that never materialised, and because the Democrats won all but two of the most closely contested seats in the Senate, made a tidy gain in the House, and swept up a tidy clutch of state governorships, in which influence-rich California was the most glittering prize of all. In less antagonistic years, such a result might not have had such resonance. But Gingrich, more than anyone in recent years, has nationalised US congressional elections, casting them as defining contests about the direction of America.

By this yardstick, November 3 was a catastrophe for Gingrich. In this party political context, he perished as a sectarian leader. This was an election where the biggest Democratic winners — Gray Davis in California, Chuck Schumer in New York, Evan Bayh in Indiana, and John Edwards in North Carolina — captured the centre ground and then forced their opponents back into the margins, casting them as obsessive and divisive, whether on impeachment, education, or abortion (which was in many respects the defining issue of many of these contests). These contests were models of Clintonian strategy.

Yet although Democrats and liberal Republicans tend naturally to cast Gingrich as a divisive figure, he fell because most Republicans saw him as too accommodating to the White House. The party recognised, too late, that their own, and Gingrich's, obsession with the Lewinsky-Starr impeachment issues had failed to galvanise Republican voters. As a result many of Gingrich's troops, and most of the candidates now seeking to replace him, argue that the Speaker let them down not by being too rightwing but by not being rightwing enough. In British Conservative terms, this party battle is the equivalent of the Major-Redwood contest of 1996, not the Thatcher-Heseltine contest of 1990.

HERE is 1998's greatest irony. With Gingrich out of the way, the likelihood now is that the Republican party will not learn the true lesson of the mid-term elections — that if they cede the centre ground to moderate Democrats they will lose. On the contrary, the party is in the process of trying to persuade itself that the only thing wrong with the Republican agenda was that Gingrich was a divisive personality. Gingrich himself saw this very clearly last week before he resigned, when he protested that he was under challenge from "people who in fact would take the party to a narrower base, with fewer members".

Gingrich is right about that, just as he was right when he warned that the whole party needed to learn from the elections, not him alone. But will that happen? The Bush brothers of Texas and Florida notwithstanding, the signs are that it will not.

For distinctively American reasons, the Republican party is only now confronting the general conservative crisis of the late 1990s — a crisis in that conservative parties have been much slower than their social democratic rivals to understand the needs and mentality of the times.

In good economic times, voters do not want ideological obsessives, and in bad economic times they want the reassurance that their governments will look after them.

The parties of the left, including the US Democrats, have positioned themselves in this territory, as the British Conservatives, the Gaullists, and the Christian Democratic parties of Germany and Italy have all found to their electoral cost. Now the Republicans have found it too. Yet, apart from the Conservatives, no rightwing party has been as determinedly ill-prepared for this change as the Republicans.

Gingrich partly understood this problem. Few of his colleagues have even thought about it, let alone drawn any conclusions from it. The Republicans lost last week because they stopped listening to the majority of voters. If they do not start doing so again very soon, they could become the American equivalent of the Tory party — toothless cannibals.

Washington Post, page 17

Republicans ready to rule out impeachment

THE Republican front-runner to succeed Newt Gingrich as Speaker of the House of Representatives gave the clearest hint yet last Sunday that his party will not press ahead with attempts to impeach President Clinton, *writes Martin Kettle in Washington.*

Asked about the claim that Clinton lied under oath about his relationship with Monica Lewinsky, and obstructed justice, Congressman Bob Livingston said: "I think the American people have certainly indicated in the polls that they don't consider it an impeachable or dismissable offence."

Though Livingston was careful to insist that he would still vote for impeachment if he believed the evidence merited it, his statement was an unmistakable sign that Republican leaders are suddenly desperate to abandon their drive to dismiss Clinton, which has backfired against them so spectacularly in the last week.

A further sign of the dramatic change in the American political climate since the mid-term elections came from another senior Republican, retiring Congressman Bill Paxon of New York, who speculated that the House might not now hold a vote on impeachment at all, even if its judiciary committee votes next month, as expected, to adopt charges against Clinton. He said there was no majority for impeachment in the new Congress elected last week.

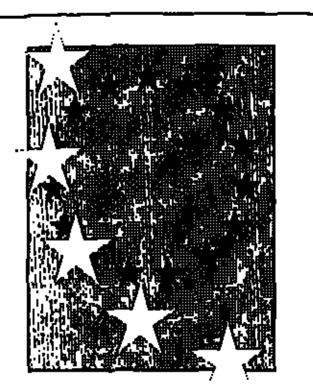
The issue is not entirely settled, though. Earlier this week a constitutional sub-committee of the House judiciary committee began hearing evidence from 19 legal experts on what constitutes an impeachable offence. And, at the inaugural hearing, the committee chairman, Charles Canady, said Clinton "must be called to account for putting his selfish personal interest ahead of his oath of office".

As Clinton spent the weekend at his Camp David retreat, White House sources confirmed that he still expected — and would accept — some form of censure from Congress.

What does seem assured is Bob Livingston's accession to the post of Speaker. His chief rival, Christopher Cox, pulled out of the race earlier this week, and urged the 223 House Republicans to back the Louisiana representative. "The vote is in", said Cox. "Bob Livingston is going to be our next speaker and I'm withdrawing for that reason."

Livingston praised Gingrich as a man of "Churchillian proportions", but made it clear he did not share the former Speaker's confrontational style: "He is a revolutionary. I am a manager."

Three voices are better than one



Europe this week

Martin Walker

THE European Commission has invoked the Holy Trinity to help it out of the mess that the coming of the euro is about to inflict on the Group of Seven (G7) leading industrial nations, the International Monetary Fund and other international forums where the single currency is supposed to speak with a single voice.

The Commission formally voted last week that as well as the national governments which are members of the European Union, these international bodies should henceforth also welcome representatives from the European Central Bank (ECB), the Commission and the European Council of Ministers.

"They will speak with a single voice. Three in one and one in three," said Europe's monetary affairs commissioner, Yves-Thibault de Silguy. "It is like the mystery of the Eternal Trinity. At least the Trinity works."

United States officials, who already grumble at being outnumbered in the G7 by four European countries (Britain, France, Germany and Italy), are trying to get to grips with the implications of the Commission proposal for various international bodies, which the Europeans seem intent on dominating through sheer weight of numbers.

"Let me get this right," said one disbelieving US diplomat. "They already have four seats on the G7 and they want three more for their banker, their bureaucrat and some other guy from a country most Americans couldn't find on a map. I guess they'll also want us to pay the hire for a bigger room."

The Commission proposal has yet to go before the IMF and the G7 and the other international bodies where the euro zone seeks to be represented. When it does, the US, Japan and Canada are likely to vote against any such extension of the European numbers in the G7, which leaves the casting vote with Britain. Since the first test of the European plan will come before the next meeting of G7 finance ministers, Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, may find himself torn between his European and his transatlantic loyalties.

The Commission got into this mess because the EU's smaller countries made it clear that they did not entirely trust the G7 members in the euro zone — France, Italy and Germany — to represent their interests. So when one of them holds the rotating presidency of the Council of Ministers, as Finland will do next year, its finance minister should go too, along with Wim Duisenberg, head of the ECB, and De Silguy for the Commission.

The Commission plan seems so deliberately complex that a cynic (or a worried British Chancellor who sees yet another sign of Britain being marginalised because of its delay in joining the euro zone) might ask if they were hoping to wreck the G7 in order to hasten the coming of a new G3 of the dollar, yen and euro. Perish the thought, says the Commission: nothing could be further from our minds. But of course, they add behind their hands, if our British friends come to understand the advantages that come from joining the euro, so much the better.

The British government certainly does understand. Brown, who grew happily accustomed this year to taking the chair at G7 finance ministers' meetings and much enjoyed his six months' chairing the Ecofin committee of Europe's 15 finance ministers when Britain held the European presidency, loathes the way that he has to leave the room when the 11 finance ministers of the euro zone want to discuss euro affairs.

Brown wants Britain in. And last week he and the British Trade Secretary, Peter Mandelson, tried to make it look inevitable. Brown announced yet another campaign to get British industry ready for the euro, and Mandelson said it was no longer a question of joining if the conditions are right, but of when. The current thinking in Downing Street is that Tony Blair must stick to his election promise to hold a referendum on joining the euro during the next parliament.

Ironically, individual British MPs are to have more influence over the new ECB, and thus the euro, than the British government. This is because of a new system agreed last week between the European parliament and the legislative assemblies of the 15 EU member states. This offers a back-door way for the Treasury committee of the House of Commons to hold the ECB to account. The first formal meeting of the European parliament's monetary affairs committee, made up of representatives of the finance and Treasury committees of the national parliaments, agreed to hold joint sessions twice a year in order to co-ordinate their approach to the ECB's annual report and to its annual publication of Broad Economic Guidelines, outlining its policies for the year ahead.

As well as giving Britain an unexpected and useful lever of influence, the new system will also intensify the pressure of the overwhelmingly left-of-centre parliaments across Europe to urge lower interest rates and more jobs-oriented policies on the orthodox central bankers of Frankfurt. It opens a new front in the looming battle between the monetarist bank and the neo-Keynesian governments in the one democratic forum to which the ECB is required by treaty to explain itself, the European parliament.

The initiative to bring national and European parliaments together to maximise their political influence over the ECB began as an informal scheme by Alan Donnelly, leader of the Labour MEPs. His plan has now been institutionalised by the European parliament's president, Jose Maria Gil-Robles, with a formal and permanent structure, its own budget and secretariat.

"We want to see the detailed and reasoned basis on which monetary policy decisions have been taken. Anything less than this level of transparency will be unacceptable," said German Social Democrat MEP Christa Randzio-Plath, who chairs the European parliament's monetary affairs committee.

"Mr Duisenberg's plan to publish the minutes after 16 years is just not good enough," said Giles Radice MP, chairman of the Treasury committee in the House of Commons, who attended the meeting at the parliament in Brussels. "If the Bank is going to establish credibility, it has to explain itself clearly and promptly and publicly."

Bungling Brussels plans new human rights body

THE European Commission is expected this week to propose establishing a new and independent agency for human rights as a way out of an extraordinary administrative bungle that has seen much of Europe's $115 million human rights programme suspended, and outraged human rights organisations, *writes Martin Walker in Brussels.*

In an unprecedented joint letter to the Commission's president, Jacques Santer, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Federation of Human Rights, the Open Society Institute and the World Organisation Against Torture have warned that "the consequences for human rights projects all over the world are extremely grave".

The British MEP who helped found the Commission's human rights and democracy project claimed last weekend that the administrative bungles were so serious that they amounted to "a nail in the Commission's coffin".

Edward McMillan-Scott, leader of the Tory group in the European Parliament, also charged that "national preferences and political cronyism" were to blame, with Commission officials trying to steer contracts and funds away from grassroots human rights projects to political foundations.

Until now the human rights programme has been run and funded through a nominally separate agency, the European Human Rights Foundation, which grew out of the London-based International Commission of Jurists. It approved and monitored about 1,200 projects submitted by human rights groups around the world, from teams working to prevent child labour and female circumcision in Africa, to helping press freedom and election monitoring in eastern Europe.

But the parliament failed to vote funds for the administrative means and proper legal basis to carry them out. The Commission allowed the foundation to finance its own administrative and monitoring costs out of the operational budget, a procedure of dubious legality.

This has panicked the Commission, already battered by a wave of fraud and maladministration scandals. The Commission has decided to close the foundation and start again with a new independent agency to support human rights. This plan, to create a European version of the US National Endowment for Democracy, was due to be presented to a meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, for approval at next month's European Union summit in Vienna.

The Week in Britain James Lewis

Anger as MPs' private lives 'outed' by media

ONE OF Rupert Murdoch's tabloid newspapers, the News Of The World, evidently thought it was in the public interest to "expose" the agriculture minister, Nick Brown, as being homosexual. But Mr Brown, popular among his fellow MPs, won the backing of Downing Street and keeps his job.

That should be the end of the matter. But parts of the media are unlikely to let the subject drop. The Sun, another Murdoch tabloid, demanded: "Tell us the truth, Tony: are we being run by a gay mafia?"

Nine homosexual MPs are now "out", but OutRage!, the campaign group, which estimates that another 30 are hiding their sexuality, argues that the more willing public figures are to come out, the less of an issue homosexuality will become.

Mr Brown's embarrassment arose mainly because he had not told his mother, who is seriously ill, that he is homosexual. In a dignified statement, he admitted to having had a two-year affair with a young man — who had tried to sell the story to the News Of The World — and added: "I had rather hoped I could, like other people, have had a private life that was private".

The BBC was widely criticised the previous week for its ham-fisted attempt to ban discussion about the private life of the Trade and Industry Secretary, Peter Mandelson, who had been named on TV as one of two gay members of the Cabinet. Many complained that it smacked of censorship, and even Mr Mandelson did not think it a good idea.

Downing Street, too, came under attack for the way it responded to revelations that the ousted Welsh Secretary, Ron Davies, had been attacked and robbed after a "nocturnal encounter" with strangers in a London park.

Although the Prime Minister's office said it knew no more than the little it had been told by Mr Davies, it had actually been briefed in detail by the police about the encounter. Such reactions, it was argued, foster the belief that homosexuality is still an issue in politics, in spite of evidence that it plays a lesser part than some editors suppose.

MYRA Hindley, jailed in 1966 for complicity with Ian Brady in the killing of two young people, was told by three judges of the Court of Appeal that she must spend the rest of her life behind bars.

Although a "tariff" of 30 years had earlier been imposed on her, she has already served 32 years and is now 56 years old.

The judges dismissed her appeal against a ruling by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, that she must spend the rest of her life in prison. Lord Justice Judge said that Hindley's confession in 1987 to two additional murders showed a greater level of involvement with Brady than she had previously confessed to. A whole life tariff was justified.

But Lord Wolff, Master of the Rolls, questioned the use of whole life tariffs — "a newcomer to the penal system" — and thought a time might come when Mr Straw or a successor would reach the conclusion that to free Hindley "would not involve any risk to the public; nor undermine the public's confidence in the criminal justice system".

Hindley is to appeal to the House of Lords and possibly to the European Court of Justice.

PRINCE CHARLES responded angrily to claims, made in a television programme, that he would be privately "delighted" if the Queen were to abdicate because he believes she is too old to modernise the monarchy. He described the suggestion as "deeply offensive".

The idea was not particularly new, and the Queen is generally known to view the monarchy as her lifelong religious duty, sacramentally accepted at her coronation.

"The Queen will always have my abiding admiration and affection, and any suggestion that I wish Her Majesty to abdicate is utterly ridiculous," said her 50-year-old son.

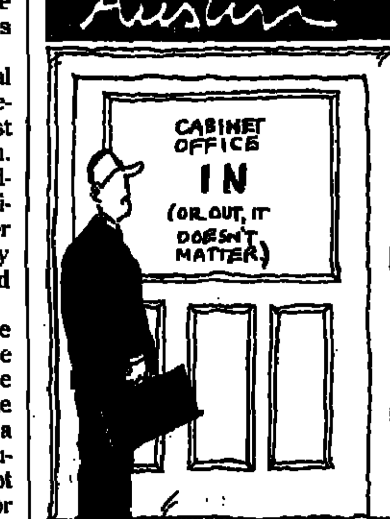
What really seemed to worry him, however, was the source of the story, and an inquiry has been launched to try to uncover the talkative "senior royal aide" to whom the reports were attributed.

SOME OF the 20,000 hospital patients who died last year during or shortly after surgery should never have gone under the knife, according to a report by the National Confidential Enquiry into Perioperative Deaths set up by Government nine years ago.

The report conceded, however, that professionals were under pressure from patients' relatives, who wanted surgery in the belief that "we can work miracles". Anaesthetists also felt under pressure from "optimistic" surgeons whose expectations for patients "can be to a degree unrealistic".

TWO SCOTS Guardsmen who chased an unarmed Catholic teenager through streets in north Belfast before shooting him dead were told they would be allowed to continue their careers in the army.

James Fisher and Mark Wright had been released after serving six years of a life sentence. The Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam, thought they should be discharged from the army, but the Army Board disagreed, saying the men had committed an error of judgment, which they regretted, at a time when their unit had suffered a fatal casualty.



A veteran at the memorial to the Household Division in Horseguards Parade PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD CLIVE

British war dead found in Russian mass grave

John Ezard and Nick Hopkins

AS REMEMBRANCE services at cenotaphs and memorials across Britain drew their best public turn-out for years, news broke that an 80-year-old mass grave of British servicemen is believed to have been found in northern Russia.

The site in a field near the town of Kandalaksha, south of Murmansk, was described as "a mass burial, we suspect", by the head of the Army Casualty Cell, George Pappadopoullos. This year the cell, based in Wiltshire, has had a number of outstanding successes in its work of identifying British dead from both world wars and tracing their relatives.

The bodies are regarded as virtually certain to be casualties of Britain's contingent in the intervention force sent to the ports of Murmansk and Archangel in 1918 in a covert bid to reverse the Russian revolution.

The force fought alongside White Russian rebels, who were smashed by the Bolshevik armies. It went home humiliated, amid recriminations. For 70 years afterwards the issue remained too sensitive for any talk of official war cemeteries.

At the Cenotaph in London last weekend veterans of the Falklands conflict marched past for the first time. Earlier, half a dozen families, some in tears, laid wreaths at the Cenotaph for 306 soldiers executed during the first world war for cowardice or desertion.

Bishop calls for moral lead

Madeleine Bunting

CABINET ministers must lead by example in family policy, and their private lives must conform to the Government's policy of strengthening the family, says the new Bishop of Liverpool.

The Rt Rev James Jones, former suffragan bishop of Hull, praised Ron Davies, the former Welsh Secretary who resigned last month over a nocturnal encounter in a London park, and insisted that private lives should match public utterances on family policy.

"Ron Davies is a person who did see that his personal life has a bearing on his public office, and he was right to resign. We can expect a particular standard of behaviour from public figures, or we are saying 'do as I say rather than as I do'," the bishop said.

When asked if he would have homosexuals excluded from the Cabinet, Bishop Jones admitted there was a role for individual conscience although he personally believed "homosexuality falls short of God's ideal".

He praised the Government for grasping the importance of reinforcing the family as a vital agent in social cohesion. But his comments appear to advocate a form of sexual McCarthyism, whereby Cabinet ministers must be monogamous married heterosexuals. His comments will cause controversy as politicians' private lives, in line with their constituents', rarely meet the Christian ideal of one partner for life.

By arguing the importance of matching behaviour to policy, Bishop Jones, a committed evangelical, places the Church in a difficult position in its dealings with the Government. Traditionally, senior figures in the Church of England while promoting the ideal, insist on compassion for those who fail to meet it.

Bishop Jones's commitment to the subject has already triggered controversy. Last spring he was the only bishop publicly to criticise Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, for taking his girlfriend on official trips abroad.

● One of the most senior Church of England bishops last week gave public opinion a further nudge on the potential marriage of Prince Charles to Camilla Parker Bowles. In an intervention with more than a hint of testing the water, Michael Turnbull, Bishop of Durham, suggested that the prince would remain acceptable as supreme governor of the Church of England if he formalised his relationship with the divorcee rather than let it remain in a state of flux.

Prisoner wins right to fight to stay with baby

A WOMAN prisoner last week won permission to issue a new legal challenge to the refusal to let her keep her newborn baby in jail, in the first case of its kind, *writes Clare Dyer.*

The 24-year-old Holloway inmate was given leave to present further arguments in the Court of Appeal on Thursday, after being blocked in the High Court last week when Mr Justice Laws ruled that the case as then framed was unarguable.

The former psychology student from south London gave birth to a girl on Tuesday last week, and is attempting to overturn the decision to refuse her a place in Holloway prison's mother and baby unit.

Three appeal court judges ruled the woman, who is breast feeding her child, was entitled to argue that she had been the victim of "procedural unfairness".

Hospital authorities and Croydon council, which had proposed taking the baby into care, agreed that mother and child could stay together in hospital, pending the outcome of the appeal.

The governor of Holloway prison, Mike Sheldrick, ruled that the woman, who is serving a five-year sentence for wounding with intent, could not have a place in the unit, the only place she can keep her child.

She is alleged to have been involved in fighting and bullying but denies the allegations.

Blair fails to break IRA arms impasse

Nicholas Watt

DOWNING STREET admitted on Monday that the Northern Ireland peace process is facing a serious challenge after Tony Blair failed to break the deadlock over the decommissioning of IRA arms during an hour of talks with Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams.

After the meeting in Downing Street, the Prime Minister's official spokesman issued an appeal to Sinn Fein and the Ulster Unionists to show goodwill in the hope of maintaining the momentum of the peace process. "We have come too far to fail now," the spokesman said.

His comments came after Mr Adams reiterated his insistence that republicans would not accept the demand by the Unionist leader, David Trimble, that the IRA must decommission some arms before Sinn Fein can take its place on the Northern Ireland executive.

The Sinn Fein president said his party was entitled to its seats on the basis of its electoral mandate and that Mr Trimble's demand was an unacceptable precondition.

"The very fact that the IRA has taken its weapons out of commission, is on cessation and is maintaining that cessation despite killings by the loyalists, despite the activities of the British forces on the ground, despite the refusal of the unionists to keep their commitment, I think is proof of the goodwill of the IRA to make this peace process work."

He dismissed as nonsense last weekend's reports that the IRA was planning a rare army convention before the end of the year to discuss whether to decommission weapons. Mr Adams said the reports had probably been inspired by British intelligence to "confuse and to make our task rather more difficult".

Mr Adams said republicans were deeply concerned that the October 31 deadline for setting up cross-border bodies had not been met because of the impasse between his party and the Ulster Unionists.

He said the process had been "bogged down quite deliberately" by the unionists. "There is increasing concern within the broad nationalist republican constituency that the refusal to keep to the deadline, to establish institutions, to move forward on all of these matters, is eroding and corroding confidence in this agreement."

Mr Adams added that he had refrained from using the word "crisis". But he said: "This impasse, if it's not bridged . . . if people don't keep to the commitments that are made, then we don't have an agreement."

The Government has indicated it hopes that General John de Chastelain, head of the International Decommissioning Body, would find a formula to overcome the impasse. But it is understood the general's staff have made it clear they cannot resolve immediate difficulties because their Good Friday agreement remit is to achieve decommissioning by May 2000.

Tessa Jowell, the women's minister, at the launch of Delivering For Women PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

Government drive for women's rights

MIDDLE-CLASS children are to be encouraged to report violence against their mothers and sisters at home as part of an initiative by the Government to tackle domestic abuse across all social classes, *writes Nicholas Watt.*

A television advertisement will target middle-class children by portraying a domestic scene similar to the successful Oxo advertisements, which turns sour when the father verbally abuses his wife.

Helen Liddell, the Scottish Office minister with responsibility for women's issues, said at the launch of Delivering For Women, the government initiative to improve the lives of women: "Domestic abuse knows no boundaries of social class or social group. We have to dispel the myth that it only occurs in criminal classes or at specific social levels."

On the wider issue of improving women's lives, Baroness Jay of Paddington, the minister for women, said that the Government was determined to sweep away barriers that prevent women from reaching their potential. She cited a series of initiatives launched by the Government in the past year, including improved child care provision and providing more family-friendly employment policies.

Lady Jay announced that the Women's Unit had decided to target teenage girls because research shows they fall behind boys after out-performing them throughout their early years at school.

There has been a substantial improvement in girls' performance at GCSEs and A levels, but "then something seems to happen, and they do not fulfil their earlier potential", said Tessa Jowell, the women's minister in the Commons.

The Government has also decided to examine the issue of women's pay because evidence shows they are still paid considerably less than men. Among full-time employees, women's hourly earnings are only 80 per cent of men's, according to last year's New Earnings Survey.

Meanwhile the Government is to back plans for the most radical overhaul of sexual equality laws seen for almost 30 years. The Equal Opportunities Commission is calling for a new equality "super law" to reflect the dramatic changes in society in the past few decades and put right the "outdated" laws that exist.

The massive legislative revamp will be the first since the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts in 1970 and 1975.

The Sex Equality bill proposed by the commission would include measures to force employers to dramatically step up monitoring of gender difference in pay and responsibilities. The commission will also recommend a new requirement on public bodies to promote equal opportunities.

The commission argues that current equal pay legislation is still riddled with loopholes, while tribunal cases against employers often drag on for years and, ultimately, can only resolve a problem for the employee bringing the case. It will recommend streamlining and simplification of the process, together with a new provision for "class action". That would allow employees to bring cases as a group, and mean that the outcome would apply to all those affected.

A further recommendation to be included in the law would tighten up rules on organisations and clubs that seek to restrict women's membership.

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Finally, the turbulent soul of English poetry is laid to rest

John Ezard

TED HUGHES, the Poet Laureate, was laid to rest last week in a mid-Devon town so peaceful and at a service so gentle that it was impossible for those there to imagine any unquiet sleep for even his turbulent spirit.

Last rites were said over him in the tiny parish church at North Tawton, on the edge of Dartmoor, his family home for 30 years. Two hundred private mourners heard his friend, the Nobel prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney, resplendently evoke the shock and sorrow at his premature death from colonic cancer at the age of 68.

"You have to go back to the death of Dylan Thomas or Lorca to find a time which so expresses that moment when a poet's death is expressed as a breach in nature," Heaney said.

Through this death, "his England is now the England of Langland, Shakespeare and Hopkins". He had become an honoured part of the span of English poetry from Langland's early work about the land, Piers Plowman, through to the muscular 19th century verse of Gerard Manley Hopkins and beyond.

"No death outside my immediate family has left me feeling more bereft. No death in my lifetime has hurt poets more. He was a tower of tenderness and strength — a great arch under which the least of poetry's children could enter and feel secure.

"His creative powers were, as Shakespeare said, still crescent. By his death, the veil of poetry is rent and the walls of learning are broken," Heaney said.

To express the bonds his friend had established in this small neck of Devon he also read Hughes's Go Fishing, dedicated to Jack Orchard, local farmer and late father of the poet's second wife Carol.

Frieda and Nicholas — Hughes's children by Sylvia Plath — carried the coffin of their father, helped by four other pall-bearers.

Afterwards the poet's body was cremated.

In Brief

MOHAMED Al Fayed agreed to pay costs, estimated at £2 million, plus undisclosed damages, to Josephine Rowland over claims that Mr Fayed ordered her late husband's safety box at Harrods to be broken into.

A NATIONWIDE blacklist to combat disruptive and violent behaviour by air travellers was approved by the industry following the recent attack on stewardess Fiona Weir.

LAWYERS acting for Louise Woodward have asked a US judge to lift a ban on the sale of her story. Meanwhile the Eappens have launched a multi-million dollar damages action against the nanny convicted of killing their son.

MICHAEL Coulton, a Royal Protection squad policeman, was sentenced to life in jail for stabbing and bludgeoning his wife to death just hours after he had come off duty guarding Buckingham Palace.

THE hunting lobby was defeated in its attempt to overturn the National Trust's ban on stag hunting at an acrimonious annual meeting in Cardiff.

THE health service will have to pay record medical damages of more than £4 million to the family of a New York banker. A High Court ruling found the defendant guilty of negligence in failing to properly intubate Joshua Yedid after a heart attack. He was left in persistent vegetative state for five years until his death in 1991.

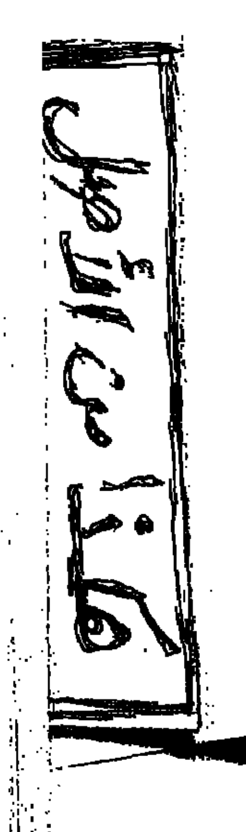
SEVEN men were arrested under anti-terrorist legislation in the Irish Republic as they left the annual meeting of Republican Sinn Fein, the party associated with Continuity IRA.

A POLICE sergeant, Andrew White, and a constable, Kenneth Boorman, who ordered dog handlers to hang their animals by their leads, then kick and punch them, were given four-month jail sentences.

A MENTORING scheme borrowed from the United States, which encourages adults to act as mentors or role models for young offenders, has been given an extra £85 million.

MICHAEL Jackson, the pop star, settled his High Court action "amicably" over articles published in the Daily Mirror alleging his face was hideously disfigured and scarred as a result of cosmetic surgery.

THE campaign for mobile phones to carry health warnings took a step forward when a scientist, Roger Coghill, began Britain's first private prosecution, claiming long-term use could cause cancer and other diseases.



Labour launches marriage crusade

Alan Travis

LONE parents and gay groups last week delivered an angry warning to the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, not to allow his new "marriage is best" moral crusade to stray into labelling other types of families as second best.

Their protests were sparked after Mr Straw underlined his own moral outlook by expressing his personal opposition to gay adoptions and lesbian IVF mothers, saying he "didn't want to see children being treated as trophies".

The argument exposed the political risks of publishing the most pro-marriage statement from a government for many years, despite Mr Straw's insistence that he was not preaching to people about how to live their lives.

"Let me make it crystal clear that this document is not about lecturing people about how they should live their lives or nagging them about how to bring up children," he said.

"I've been divorced myself. I was raised by a single parent with mother bringing up the five of us. So I'm not hectoring single parents who on the whole do an extremely good job in very difficult circumstances. However, the evidence is that children are best brought up where you have two natural parents, and it is more likely to be a stable family if they are married."

The development of the Government's first family policy Green Paper has been personally driven by Tony Blair and Mr Straw, despite the history of failed "back to basics" moral initiatives under the previous government.

The paper itself contains a barrage of initiatives to support marriage and family life, including a National Family and Parenting Institute, making pre-nuptial agreements legally binding, encouraging grandparents to play a much bigger role in supporting families, and reinventing the role of civic registrar to include marriage preparation and even baby-naming ceremonies.

Among the detailed proposals are new measures such as ending "quickie 24-hour weddings" by insisting couples give 15 days' notice, and a national award scheme for "family-friendly" companies.

But missing from the package were the details of new national strategies to tackle domestic violence and teenage pregnancies, which were promised by Mr Blair in his Labour party conference speech last month. Both have been delayed as Whitehall thrashes out the detail of the policy.

Gingerbread, the campaign group for single parent families, warned the Home Secretary it was impossible to promote marriage as the ideal without risking the stigmatisation of alternative families.

Liz Sewell, Gingerbread's chief executive, said: "We're not condemning the paper. A lot of it is very good but they shouldn't be focusing on marriage. Some 24 per cent of families are headed by a lone parent. It doesn't match the reality of people's experiences and it risks alienating people."

But the Conservative deputy leader, Peter Lilley, said the Government's plans would only lead to more state intrusion in family life.

"Jack Straw plans to nationalise baptism, turn overworked health visitors into secular vicars and introduce an unprecedented intrusion into family life," he said.



Proposals for placing 'families at the heart of our society'

Support for parents
A National Family and Parenting Institute is to be set up to provide advice and develop better parenting support programmes. It will be backed by a national freephone parenting helpline.

Health visitors
Enhanced roles for health visitors to cover support for families as a whole and offer visits through school years. A £540 million Sure Start programme to co-ordinate help for families most in need. Improved parenting education in schools.

Mentors and grandparents
Mentors for young people whose parents are not able to provide a stable environment. Social services should place more children in care with grandparents. Housing authorities to give weight to the needs of grandparents so families can live nearby.

Strengthening marriage
"Pre-nuptial" written agreements about money and property are to be made legally binding on those who wish to make them. Improved guidance to help people prepare for marriage. Proposals for modernising registrars' roles include requiring both partners to attend the register office to give at least 15 days' notice of marriage.

Saving marriages
Couples to be required to attend individual information meetings three months before divorce or separation to help victims of domestic violence and make couples face up to the consequences of divorce. Measures to reduce conflict in divorce proceedings will make clear how property is to be divided.

Balancing family and work
Companies will be encouraged to provide flexible family-friendly working arrangements and maternity leave will be extended from 14 to 18 weeks.

Better financial support
Reform of tax and benefit system to help families, including increased child benefit, working families tax credit and the New Deal for lone parents.

New inquiry opens into racist killing

Amelia Gentleman

A NEW investigation is to be launched into the suspected racist murder of a black musician who was found burning in a London street, police announced last week.

The announcement came as the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, took the unusual step of meeting the dead man's family to listen to their concerns about the way police handled the investigation into his death.

Michael Menson, aged 30, died of multiple organ failure caused by his burns, 16 days after the attack in Edmonton, north London, in February last year. Despite his repeated claims that he had been attacked, police assumed that he had set fire to himself in a suicide attempt, and failed to investigate.

Scotland Yard later admitted in a letter to the Menson family that senior officers had made serious mistakes, and earlier this year an inquest jury found that he had been unlawfully killed. The family believe that police racism was behind the failure of the initial investigation.

A team from the Race and Violent Crime Unit at the Metropolitan police — set up in response to controversy over police handling of the murder of a black teenager, Stephen Lawrence — will undertake the reinvestigation into Mr Menson's death.

However, the Home Secretary told the family, who had been pressing for a public inquiry along the lines of the Lawrence inquiry, that he was unable to intervene directly in an individual case and could only establish a public inquiry if the competence of an entire police force had been called into question.

Instead, Mr Straw expressed concern about the situation, agreed to meet the family again if and when it was deemed necessary, and promised to pass on their concerns to the Metropolitan police commissioner, Sir Paul Condon.

Five of Mr Menson's 10 brothers and sisters were present at the meeting. They told Mr Straw of their frustration that three of the four officers involved in the original inquiry had retired, and thus were immune from disciplinary action.

Blair's £1bn plan to develop IT in schools

John Carvel

A £1 BILLION package to develop learning through computers in schools was announced by Tony Blair last week during a visit to Trimdon village primary school in his County Durham constituency.

He said the investment over the next four years should ensure all children emerge from school with the necessary skills in the new information technologies. There should be no division between pupils whose families could afford to buy home computers and a new generation of "information poor".

The programme was "one of the largest committed by any government in the world". It would include resources to connect every school to a National Grid for Learning.

The Government intends to kitemark educational web sites providing material that ministers think is suitable for learning in schools. This will form the core of information available on the grid, backed up by Whitehall-approved material to help teachers prepare their lessons and develop their techniques.

● The Government is to set aside £380 million to strengthen safeguards for children and young people living away from home, following a series of child abuse scandals in homes, foster care and boarding schools. Measures will include wider access to police checks on people working with youngsters, and a training programme for foster carers and staff of children's homes.

Extradition of Pinochet 'may put Chile's stability at risk'

Jamie Wilson

THE extradition of General Augusto Pinochet to Spain could threaten the internal stability of Chile as well as Britain's diplomatic relations with the South American state, five Law Lords heard on Monday.

On the third day of the appeal against the High Court decision to declare the former Chilean dictator's arrest unlawful, Clare Montgomery QC, for Pinochet, said the key issue in the case was whether "this court should interfere with the delicate balance between the interests of justice and state stability".

She said the Law Lords were in effect being asked to walk a thin line between condemning torture and other crimes and expressing a view of the "delicate nature" with which Chile had achieved national reconciliation.

She argued that when a country such as Chile replaced an authoritarian regime with a democratic system, there was inevitably tension between the need to call to account human rights abusers and a need for reconciliation. Chile had come to terms with its past since the return of democratic rule in 1990, by declaring an amnesty and appointing Pinochet as senator for life, which made him immune from prosecution.

In any case she argued, the judicial authorities in Chile were examining allegations of crimes carried out under his regime. "It will be for the courts to decide whether he is to be accorded immunity under the basis of being senator for life."

If the House of Lords upholds the appeal the final decision over whether the 82-year-old general can be extradited will rest with the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

Ms Montgomery said that the concept of head of state immunity was applicable in this case. This meant that although the crimes Pinochet is accused of could be considered "repugnant", he could not be prosecuted. There was no suggestion in the charges levelled against him by the Spanish magistrate, Baltasar Garzón, that any of his actions were motivated by "sadism", she said.

But Juan Pablo Letelier, son of Orlando Letelier, a former Chilean defence minister who was allegedly assassinated on Pinochet's orders in Washington in 1976, told a press conference that there was "no arrangement, no agreement, no settlement" based on Pinochet enjoying immunity in Chile.

The hearing continued.

Tobacco companies labelled 'world's best drug pushers'

Sarah Boseley

BRITISH tobacco companies are among the world's "most efficient drug pushers", using aggressive marketing tactics in developing countries, the British Medical Association claimed last week.

The promise of glamour and gifts offered by a number of companies attract young people in a way that would be illegal in the United Kingdom, the BMA maintained.

In Malaysia, where direct advertising is banned, Dunhill cigarettes sponsors all league football and the screening of English Premier football matches.

In Sri Lanka, Benson and Hedges sponsors discos and dance competitions, and gives away branded personal stereos and watches.

At a combined conference, the BMA, Action on Smoking and Health (Ash) and the World Development Movement called on the British government to press for an international tobacco control treaty.

Sir Alexander Macara, of the BMA, said deaths from smoking-related diseases would rise from 1 million a year to 7 million by 2030. He said tobacco companies were "the world's most efficient drug pushers".

Mary Assunta, from the Consumers' Association of Penang, Malaysia, said that in her country 60 per cent of men now smoke. In Vietnam the figure is 73 per cent and in Cambodia 65 per cent. "Men are the sole bread-winners, and if he is smoking two or three packets a day he is siphoning off money needed for other important things."

She called on the British government to help, and said: "We are pleased to see Mr Blair's government is taking measures to protect the health and well-being of the British, but please put us on the agenda.

"British companies are pushing their products in Asia. Through it comes disease and death. British companies should not be able to do in Asia what they can't do here."

Clive Bates, director of Ash, said British shareholders were profiting from the aggressive marketing of tobacco companies in developing countries now that smoking was declining in industrialised countries, which have controls on advertising and cigarette sales.

He said: "Unless your pension fund is ethically screened, it will probably have shares in British American Tobacco or another tobacco company."

Gro Harlem Brundtland, the new director of the World Health Organisation, has made tobacco as high a priority as malaria control and is working for ratification of an international treaty by 2003. But only a handful of countries, including France, Canada and Finland, have so far committed themselves.

Emma Must, of the World Development Movement, said the Government's White Paper on tobacco, due before the end of the year, was a unique opportunity for Mr Blair to champion the issue.

Holding up a football shirt, suitable for an eight-year-old, emblazoned with the Dunhill and World Cup logos, she said that such promotions gave the lie to claims that the industry did not target children.

The minister for public health, Tessa Jowell, said that Britain would co-operate fully in planning any international convention to help member states strengthen their own tobacco controls.

The Tobacco Manufacturers Association denied that companies targeted children. John Carlisle, its director of public affairs, said: "Wild accusations from the World Development Movement that advertising by British manufacturers is directed at children are false. Our member companies adhere to the legislative and regulatory controls in each country where they trade."

Army on standby to counter millennium bug chaos

Michael White

SENIOR ministers are privately admitting that the millennium bug could cause such chaos in electricity supply and telecommunications on New Year's Day 2000 that troops might be needed to maintain emergency services.

A leaked exchange between the Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, and the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, last week showed Mr Dewar fighting a rearguard action to protect Territorial Army (TA) units from disbandment — because they might be needed to support stricken communities.

But what startled MPs and led to questions in the Commons from the Scottish National Party leader, Alex Salmond, was an admission at the end of Mr Dewar's letter — dated August 31 — in which he warned that loss of TA units might leave the Government "open to criticism over a reduction of emergency preparedness at a time when millennium bug problems pose a potential threat to key services such as electricity and telecommunications".

Ministers fear the bug could cause chaos throughout public services, from traffic lights to hospitals to emergency service switchboards.

The letter is the first admission that members of the armed forces may need to be drafted in to cope with major civil incidents caused by the bug.

But Downing Street, the Cabinet Office and the two ministries last week all played down the threat of disrupted services when timing mechanisms inside older computer software have to grapple with the "00" problem created by the arrival of the new millennium. The army is only involved in efforts to prevent millennium bug damage to its own efficiency, officials said.

An Action 2000 team has set up a national infrastructure forum to look at the problems of the utilities. Tony Blair has also called for 20,000 "bug-busters" to be set to work correcting defective equipment, though staff have proved hard to obtain.

Experts are divided on the scale of the looming problem, although international transport systems can have no guarantees that they will survive the dangers.

Margaret Beckett, who inherited the millennium bug portfolio with her new job as Leader of the Commons in July, admitted at Labour's conference that the problem could not be fully resolved.

Efforts would have to be focused on priorities and contingency planning by local authorities, she said. Everything from traffic lights to hospital computers could fail.





Cooling a hot planet

ONE year on from the Kyoto summit, the international community meets again this week to tackle global warming. This should be the third most important conference on climate change the world has seen. First came Rio's Earth Summit in 1992, which created the Convention on Climate Change and challenged the world to create an all inclusive approach. Then came Kyoto, the first legally binding agreement under which the developed world agreed to reduce its overall greenhouse gas emissions. Now comes Buenos Aires, where nitty-gritty rules and mechanisms by which emissions are to be reduced are to be thrashed out. Surely we should all be celebrating this international commitment to save the planet? It would be comforting but far too complacent.

Each step has been dogged by discouraging fudges, missed deadlines and disappointing targets. George Bush agreed to United States participation in Rio only if firm targets were abandoned. It is already clear that the summit's goal — to reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2000 — will be met only by Britain and Germany. Then came the cynical Kyoto deal: developing states were not required to sign up to voluntary reductions in exchange for the US, which produces 25 per cent of the world's emissions, being able to engage in "emissions trading" — buying credits from states which reduce emissions below international target levels. Far from promoting self-restraint, Kyoto encouraged self-indulgence.

One danger facing the conference is getting bogged down in detail. Kyoto called for a 5 per cent reduction in 1990 emission levels by 2010. There are still serious doubts whether this will be achieved, yet as early as 1990 the world's top scientists were calling for a 50 per cent reduction by 2050. Warnings have come thick and fast since then of the devastating effects current levels are causing. Even more serious have been events. The devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch in Central America is only the latest in a series of weather changes wreaking havoc round the globe. A second challenge facing Buenos Aires is to pay more heed to the need to help states adapt to existing climate changes. British ministers were reminded last month by their advisers of the need to spend more money now on developing drought-resistant crops and plants that grow in saline soils. Dreadful though Hurricane Mitch's devastation has been, the threat from future disasters is of a much grimmer dimension: whole populations displaced as deltas — such as the Nile, Mekong and Gangees — are submerged. Who will house, clothe and feed the displaced? Never have scientific warnings been more serious.

Netanyahu dives for cover (again)

THE SUICIDE car bomb in a Jerusalem market last week and the Israeli Cabinet's reaction to it show in dramatic but tragic light that the militant Islamic group Hamas and Binyamin Netanyahu have much in common. Hamas has never made a secret of its opposition to the peace deal which the Americans brokered at the Wye River plantation last month. It rejected it before, during, and after the negotiations, arguing that the deal was wrong in principle and in substance. It gave Yasser Arafat and his colleagues in the government of the Palestinian Authority little more than a fig leaf to cover the nakedness of their strategy. It was, they said, a self-defeating humiliation. When, a few days after returning from the United States, as a sign of good faith with his negotiating partners Mr Arafat put Hamas's spiritual leader under house arrest it was almost inevitable that one of the movement's followers would take action. So the latest Jerusalem bomb comes as no surprise.

The Israeli government's reaction is more illuminating. By seizing on the bomb attack to suspend the peace process and threaten to take another provocative step towards building the controversial Har Homa housing project in Arab East Jerusalem, Mr Netanyahu removes any doubt that he was serious about looking for a peace deal. He went to Wye as a man who, in opposition, had denounced the *Oslo* agreement of 1993 as a lie. Once in power and faced with the responsibility of putting his promises into action, he never flinched from his hardline view. The Americans cajoled and pleaded with him to take the negotiating track, and he always did so with undisguised reluctance.

Now, it is clear, he was negotiating at Wye either with deliberate bad faith or on the assumption that a pretext would be found to back out of any agreement he made. He knew that no peace deal would eliminate the suicide bombers and reconcile them to co-existence. Israel already has some of the world's most draconian security arrangements and long-standing practices of retribution. But they have not worked because they cannot. Mr Netanyahu was well aware of that, just as he knew that Mr Arafat could not act as Israel's surrogate security agent. Even if Mr Arafat wanted to declare the "all-out war on the terrorists" he and his police could not succeed in preventing suicide bombings.

The Israeli prime minister's behaviour in the wake of this attack is in stark contrast to the way the various parties reacted to the grisly bombing at Omagh in the wake of the signing of the Good Friday peace deal in Northern Ireland. It took more lives than any single atrocity in the 30 years of the Troubles. Yet on all sides, from the British government to the Ulster Unionists to Sinn Fein, the reaction was the same. They denounced the bombers and insisted that their actions would not derail the peace deal.

In Israel, regrettably, the constituency for peace has never been as strong as in Northern Ireland. Even before Mr Netanyahu the governing parties were ultra-cautious about ceding land or accepting Palestinian rights. But under Yitzhak Rabin the Labour party had started a new approach. Mr Netanyahu never agreed with it, and he is determined not to change soon. Caught between the rage of the Palestinians and the intransigence of its own short-sighted government, Israel's insecurity is doomed to go on.

Inequalities amid equal rights

UNDER a government which bolted on a women's minister as an after-thought, women in Britain are doing all right. The new women's minister, Baroness Jay, has every reason to be proud of her government's record: the new childcare strategy, the push to a "family-friendly" work package, social security reforms that include a big increase in child benefit, and the sharing of pensions on divorce. Like most other European states, Britain has seen women making major advances in the professions — equal numbers entering law and medicine and even more females taking business studies than men. Where only a generation ago in Britain there were seven male undergraduates for every three female, women now outnumber men in higher education. More female graduates found jobs than male graduates at the last count. By next year there will be more women than men in the workforce, though a big proportion remain part-timers.

Yet only the ideologically blind can ignore the discrimination and lack of equal opportunities that still continue: pay rates have narrowed, but are still at an unacceptable 20 per cent below the male rate; and women are still massively under-represented in certain professions, including law, medicine, science, technology, engineering and government.

There are other problems too, as Baroness Jay has pointed out: Britain's record rate of unwanted teenage pregnancies; one in four women suffering from domestic violence; rigid labour laws which deter many women workers, such as nurses or teachers, from returning to their old careers. At the moment, there are 140,000 registered nurses who are staying at home, reflecting the fact that the health service has been one of the slowest employers to recognise the importance of introducing family-friendly working practices.

Further reforms are in the pipeline, and these should complement earlier ministerial initiatives, such as the move by education ministers to examine the widening gap between girls and boys at GCSE level. If the current laddish culture is successfully challenged — and the anti-learning boy culture corrected — there ought to be less domestic violence. Meanwhile a positive ministerial response is needed to the Equal Opportunity Commission's call for a comprehensive and modernised sex discrimination law incorporating the various earlier acts. Many problems, such as sexual harassment, are not even currently covered.

Arafat sells his people down the Wye river

Edward Said

THE unravelling of the Wye River Agreement between Israel, the United States and the Palestinian Authority has already begun. After a car bomb in Jerusalem, the Israeli government refused to ratify the interim peace deal until the Authority clamped down on anti-Israel militants. New obstacles are bound to develop on a daily basis.

In its reporting of the agreement, the US press did not bother to point out that the 40 per cent supposedly being given to Arafat's corrupt authority was broken down into bits and pieces, all of it subject to Israel's choice of date and location of the land to be partially vacated. Since the signing there have been at least two postponements, and no bypassing roads are to be given up: on the contrary, Israel has asked the US for an additional $1.3 billion for redeployments.

The West Bank is still divided into three areas. Area A is entirely Palestinian-run except for security, water, and exits and entrances; Area B is jointly patrolled by Palestinian and Israeli soldiers, with security, water, building permits, exits and entrances entirely controlled by Israel; Area C is completely Israeli. Before Wye, these amounted respectively to 2.8 per cent, 24 per cent and 72 per cent of the land area.

Wye gave the Palestinians an additional 1 per cent from Area C, and 14.2 per cent from area B, thus putting about 18 per cent under Palestinian control again, with the same exclusions and provisos.

In addition, Israel will transfer about 13 per cent more from Area C to Area B, where — to repeat — Israel really controls things, including of course the 3 per cent designated as a nature preserve (whatever that is supposed to mean). In effect then, the Palestinians got — if that is the right word — a total of 18.2 per cent of the West Bank added to Area A, the rest to Area B. In no case did the Palestinians acquire sovereignty, control over exits and entrances, water, and overall security.

The Palestinian areas are, for the most part, non-contiguous and allow no free passage between them. Jerusalem remains off limits to residents of Gaza and the West Bank.

Most of the rest of the Wye River Memorandum is taken up with security arrangements which in effect commit the Authority to Israel's security, but not the other way round. In addition, the CIA is to play an active role in adjudicating security issues such as extradition, combating the "terrorist" infrastructure, incitement and the like. Israel in the meantime can do what it likes, including the building of more settlements, taking more land, adding to Jerusalem's area, and helping itself to all the West Bank water it wants.

The fate of Palestinian human rights looks grim indeed, subject to dictatorial control by an already despotic Arafat backed up by the CIA and Israel. But the real problem with all the land transfer arrangements is not only that it gives Israel a unilateral say over which land is to be transferred: it also allows Israel a generous number of "phases" by which the transferral is to be completed, without any mechanism to enforce delays or delinquencies.

Given its record since the Oslo Agreements were first signed, no one ought to be sanguine that redeployments of the Israeli army will take place according to schedule.

As for the changes in the National Covenant that Israel has demanded, that will require a hasty convening of the group which Bill Clinton, for reasons that do him no credit, has chosen to address. The Palestinian airport and the Gaza seaport were left suitably vague. All in all then, a dishearteningly mean-spirited, niggling document without too much chance of real enforcement and no chance at all to change the relationship between the two sides. The Israelis will continue to be the masters, Palestinians — pardon the expression — the abject niggers.

What now? A number of things propose themselves. In the first place, the Palestinian leadership should be roundly censured by as many people as possible for so disgracefully supine a negotiating performance.

Second, the notion that literally hundreds of Palestinian prisoners are being left to rot in Israeli jails (Netanyahu gave up 750 of the 3,000-5,000 reportedly still held) is a scandal for which Arafat should be held responsible. Third, the deferral of later deployments, later consideration of safe passage for Palestinians, later permits for industrial parks and the like is also scandalous.

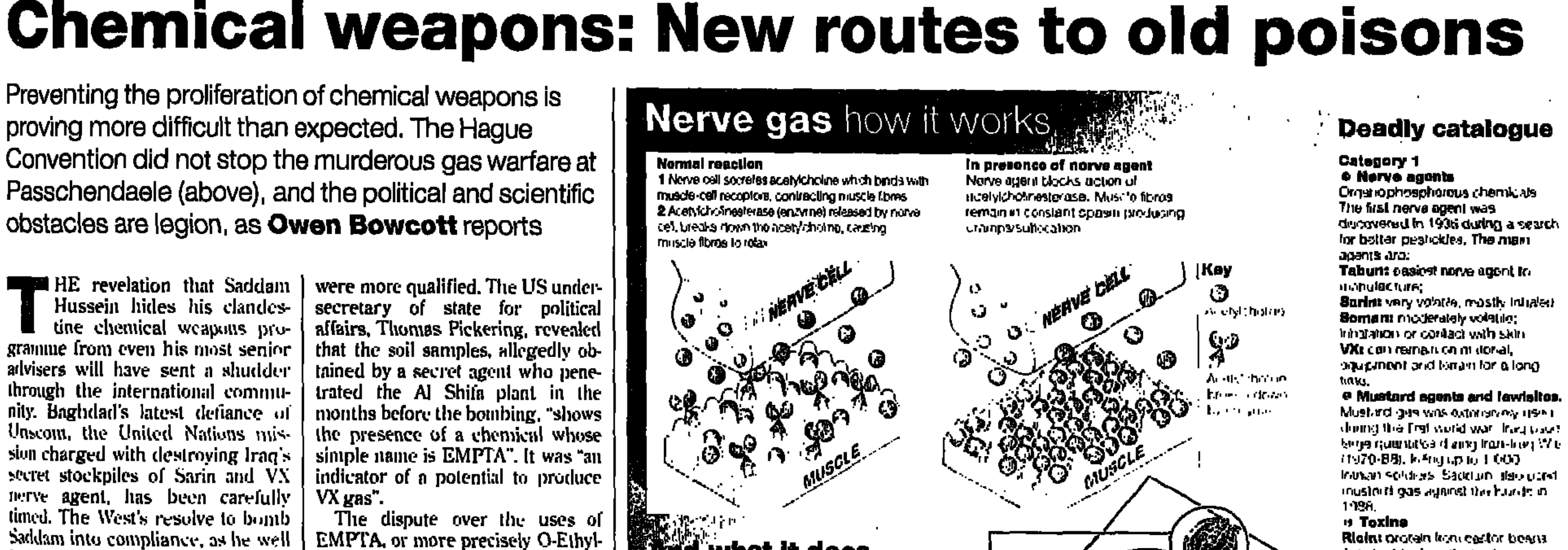
IN SUM, Arafat and his people have done the usual thing: given up without very much of a struggle and certainly without the slightest trace of a strategic or moral vision. In effect Palestinians are now tied into security arrangements for Israel that continue to devalue and debase Palestinian life.

Refugees will remain refugees and Palestinians will continue to have Israeli soldiers as their keepers. The devil only knows what the horrendous settlers are about to let loose on the exposed citizens of the West Bank and Gaza. Certainly Arafat will do nothing for them except urge them to wait for "our" state, in the meantime robbing them blind, letting corruption continue, buying off potential opponents, jailing, torturing and killing anyone who stands up to him.

An imperative now is to urge Palestinians to try to deter people from attending and participating in that council meeting which is supposed to change, cancel or fiddle with the charter. The idea that people should be rounded up just to do Israel's bidding, with not a whit of a change in the highly discriminatory laws against Palestinians, strikes me as totally preposterous.

The only real course for Palestinians today is to urge their representatives on the legislative council to vote with their feet, and to begin once again to play for a new council, one whose members are neither appointed by, nor beholden to, Arafat.

The time grows less and less before we will have allowed this ruinously incompetent and corrupt leadership to sell us out totally, and the sooner we start to organise a major Palestinian meeting to take place outside the Arab world, the better. The midnight hour has already struck.



PHOTOGRAPH: IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

Chemical weapons: New routes to old poisons

Preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons is proving more difficult than expected. The Hague Convention did not stop the murderous gas warfare at Passchendaele (above), and the political and scientific obstacles are legion, as **Owen Bowcott** reports

THE revelation that Saddam Hussein hides his clandestine chemical weapons programme from even his most senior advisers will have sent a shudder through the international community. Baghdad's latest defiance of Unscom, the United Nations mission charged with destroying Iraq's secret stockpiles of Sarin and VX nerve agent, has been carefully timed. The West's resolve to bomb Saddam into compliance, as he well knows, is temporarily weakened.

The news from Abbas al-Janabi, one of the most senior defectors of recent years to escape with his life from the heart of Saddam's regime, is a reminder of just how difficult it is to control chemical weapons technology. Interviewed in the Guardian last week, Janabi claimed that even Iraq's prime minister, Tariq Aziz, did not know that Iraq still retained nerve agents.

Trying to put the murderous genie back into the bottle once scientists had devised such a lethal arsenal was never a realistic prospect. Preventing proliferation of the "poor man's nuclear bomb", despite the advent of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), is proving a harder task than many imagined.

Obtaining the incontrovertible evidence necessary to prove that chemical weapons are being made or stored is often an elusive quest. Three months after the Pentagon launched a cruise missile attack on Sudan's Al Shifa pharmaceutical factory, for example, its justification is coming under renewed attack. It would not be the first time that politicians in the United States have leapt to conclusions on the basis of microscopic residues.

In 1981 the US State Department claimed that Soviet aircraft were supplying toxins to communist guerrillas in Laos and Kampuchea. Several years later it emerged that so-called yellow rain was neither a biological nor chemical warfare agent but simply mass droppings of the giant honeybee, *Apis dorsata*.

The aftermath of the Sudan attack illustrates the problems of basing pivotal foreign policy decisions on the complexities of chemical analysis. In background briefings, a US Department of Defence official declared: "We know with high confidence that Shifa produces a [chemical] precursor that is unique to the production of VX." The deadly nerve agent, discovered in the 1950s, was allegedly being supplied to Iraq's chemical weapons programme.

A few days later the assertions were more qualified. The US undersecretary of state for political affairs, Thomas Pickering, revealed that the soil samples, allegedly obtained by a secret agent who penetrated the Al Shifa plant in the months before the bombing, "shows the presence of a chemical whose simple name is EMPTA". It was "an indicator of a potential to produce VX gas".

The dispute over the uses of EMPTA, or more precisely O-Ethyl-Methyl-Phosphono-Thioic Acid, illustrates just how hard it is to obtain scientific, let alone political, agreement when seeking to control the chemical weapons trade. EMPTA can indeed be a precursor, or chemical constituent, of VX gas. But even the experts disagree on its legal status. Britain's Chemical Industries Association, for instance, suggests that EMPTA falls under schedule 1A/3 of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), "because it has little or no civil use".

But the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) — the Hague-based international body responsible for enforcing the CWC since 1997 — believes EMPTA is covered in schedule 2B/4 of the convention. "There are approximately 10,000 compounds of this kind," observed the OPCW's spokesman, Donato Kiniger-Passagli. "On the basis of our studies . . . these chemicals could be used as herbicides or insecticides."

A further complicating factor is that new routes are always being devised to old poisons. To cope with the multiple permutations of chemicals, and the relative ease with which precursors can be combined into variations of lethal toxins, the convention lists families of multi-hyphenated compounds whose sale and export are controlled.

There they all are listed under their common or battlefield names: Sarin (first developed by the Nazis), its derivative Tabun, Soman, VX, lewisites, Nitrogen and Sulphur Mustard gases, and Ricin. Contact with most of them would reduce the human nervous system to instant spasm, inducing suffocation. But alongside them are compounds such as Methylphosphonyl dichloride or Ethyldiethanolamine. It is these precursors, or chemical building blocks, that trigger so many arguments over whether they have legitimate, peaceful uses.

The developments of the past few months have heightened fears about chemical weapon proliferation among the OPCW's 200-strong team of inspectors. In September the Dutch confirmed that an El Al airliner which crashed into a block of flats in Amsterdam six years ago was carrying 42 gallons of a chemical known as DMMP, used in the production of Sarin. The containers were destined for the Institute of Biological Research in Nes Ziona, outside Tel Aviv, even though Israel has signed (but not ratified) the convention against chemical weapons. For years Israeli officials had refused to comment on "those kind of reports". And last month the UN disarmament mission to destroy Saddam Hussein's former arsenal of chemical weapons confirmed that Iraq had developed the technology to put the deadly VX nerve gas into warheads before the 1991 Gulf war.

The knowledge of how to create chemical weapons is becoming more widely disseminated. Even lone, crank scientists have succeeded in producing toxins. The most notorious is Aum Shinrikyo, the cult which released Sarin into Tokyo's crowded underground in 1995. Terrorist groups have so far refrained from such tactics, calculating, perhaps, that any ensuing backlash would discredit their cause.

It would not be difficult for them, however, to develop chemical weapons. Precursors, the OPCW admits, are obtainable through commercial sources.

Critics of the CWC claim it is doomed to failure because rogue states such as Libya, North Korea and Iraq remain outside the agreement. In force only since April last year, the CWC has been ratified so far by 120 nations.

The history of previous attempts to control toxic chemicals is chequered. As early as 1675, a Franco-German agreement signed in Strasbourg banned the use of poisoned bullets. The Hague Convention of 1899 pledged signatory states would abstain from using weapons to spread "asphyxiating or deleterious gases". But it did not prevent the horrors of Passchendaele in the first world war.

As for the Al Shifa plant, Sudan — which has not ratified the CWC — insists the factory was manufacturing only medicines and chemicals for civilian use. The State Department, which claims it first spotted unusually heavy security around the plant in 1996, doubts whether soil samples will be made available for outside analysis.

Several international experts are highly sceptical of American claims. Alistair Hay, a reader in chemical pathology at Leeds university and chemical weapons expert, does not believe that the US evidence constitutes proof. "EMPTA is not the most specific breakdown product or precursor that would allow you to say that this was definitely VX," he says. "It's extremely open. It's not my view that you should send in cruise missiles on the basis of evidence that is questioned."

Nerve gas how it works

Normal reaction
1 Nerve cell secretes acetylcholine which binds with muscle-cell receptors, contracting muscle fibres
2 Acetylcholinesterase (enzyme) released by nerve cell, breaks down the acetylcholine, causing muscle fibres to relax

In presence of nerve agent
Nerve agent blocks action of acetylcholinesterase. Muscle fibres remain in constant spasm producing cramps/suffocation

NERVE CELL
MUSCLE
Key
Acetylcholine

And what it does...

LOW DOSE
Running nose; impaired vision accompanied by eye pain; headaches; tiredness; slurred speech; hallucinations; nausea

MEDIUM DOSE
Respiratory problems; gastrointestinal cramp and vomiting; incontinence; powerful discharge of saliva; running eyes; local tremors or convulsions; sweating

HIGH DOSE
Convulsions and loss of consciousness; muscular paralysis of respiratory system; damage to central nervous system; death (suffocation)

Antidote
Immediate treatment. Many armed forces have auto-injectors which contain oxime and atropine. VX is the easiest to treat

Decommissioning timetable

The multilateral Chemical Weapons Convention came into force April 29, 1997. Of the 169 nations who have now signed or acceded to the convention, 120 have ratified it. Only 13 nations have not signed, including Iraq, Sudan and Serbia. Signatories are required to destroy all chemical weapons within a fixed 10-year time frame. Weapons' destruction will be verified by OPCW.

Destroying category 2 and 3 weapons · Facility testing · 1% of category 1 · All category 2 and 3, and 20% of category 1 · 45% of category 1 · All category 1 weapons

Years 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Deadly catalogue

Category 1

Nerve agents
Organophosphorous chemicals
The first nerve agent was discovered in 1936 during a search for better pesticides. The main agents are:
Tabun: easiest nerve agent to manufacture;
Sarin: very volatile, mostly inhaled
Soman: moderately volatile; inhalation or contact with skin
VX: can remain on material, equipment and terrain for a long time.

Mustard agents and lewisites.
Mustard gas was extensively used during the first world war. Iraq used large quantities during Iran-Iraq War (1970-88), killing up to 1,000 Iranian soldiers. Saddam also used mustard gas against the Kurds in 1988.

Toxins
Ricin: protein from castor beans. Acts by blocking the body's synthesis of proteins
Saxitoxin: organic chemical synthesised by blue-green algae. Acts on nervous system. 1mg will eventually kill.

Category 2
Three toxic chemicals.
Numerous precursors to nerve agents, mustard gas, lewisites and BZ.
Amiton: organophosphorous insecticide considered too toxic for agricultural use.
PFIB: gas byproduct of Teflon. Inhalation of large dose is fatal.
BZ: biochemical tool. Weaponised as an incapacitating agent.

Category 3
Four toxic chemicals.
Seven nerve agent precursors.
Six mustard agent precursors.
Cyanogen chloride and **Hydrogen cyanide:** used as pesticides. Both act by blocking cell respiration. Forms of hydrogen cyanide were used in Nazis gas chambers and by Iraq against the Kurds.
Chloropicrin: Grain disinfectant and soil sterilant which is a severe irritant and lacrymator (induces tear flow).

GRAPHICS: PADDY ALLEN, STEFAN BAYLEY

US threatens escalation of banana trade war

Stephen Bates in Brussels

THE United States was preparing this week to launch the biggest trade war against Europe for more than a decade in an escalation of the long-running dispute over banana imports.

The move, which European Union officials believe is fuelled by political contributions to the Democratic party by Chiquita, the US banana-exporting multinational, looks set to affect British and French food products in particular, including wine, cheese and whisky.

A list of products to be targeted for sanctions was expected to be issued in Washington on Tuesday.

The threat comes just weeks after the current harvest in Honduras and parts of the Caribbean was wiped out by Hurricane Mitch — a catastrophe which is likely to increase European dependence on Chiquita's imports from unaffected parts of Central America.

American officials are believed to be targeting British and French products because of their defence of their former colonies' banana exports, with Germany and Scandinavia being informally told their trade with the US is unlikely to be affected.

The dispute over banana imports is long-running and European retaliation is already being discussed.

The row, which the Europeans see as a dispute over their attempt to protect small-scale Caribbean farmers from being wiped out by a predatory US multinational, is the latest in a series of trade spats between the EU and the US.

Both sides have traded insults in recent days over whether each other is doing enough to defuse Asian economic crisis, with Vice-President Al Gore accusing Europe of not being open enough to imports from the Far East, and the EU responding with figures showing that its markets have been much more accommodating this year than American ones.

In an unusually heated response to the prospect of US sanctions, a spokesman for the EU's trade commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, described the threats as misguided and inept.

Sir Leon's spokesman, Nigel Gardner, said: "If the US goes down the road of imposing unilateral sanctions, it will have extremely damaging consequences. We will not co-operate with a gun illegally aimed at our heads."

The move emerged at last weekend's conference of US and EU business leaders at Charlotte, North Carolina, attended by Charlene Barshefsky, the American trade representative, Sir Leon and Martin Bangemann, the EU industry commissioner.

At the heart of the banana dispute is US dissatisfaction with EU import policy, which the Americans claim discriminates against Latin American importers represented by Chiquita, even though the company has already cornered nearly 75 per cent of the European market.

Although the US itself is not a banana exporter to Europe, the administration lodged a complaint with the World Trade Organisation last year within 24 hours of a decision by Chiquita's chairman Carl H Lindner Jnr, previously a staunch supporter of the Republicans, to donate $500,000 to Democratic party funds.

Brown forecasts growth for Britain

Larry Elliott and Michael White

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, last week rejected warnings that Britain is being drawn into a deepening world recession when he unveiled an upbeat Treasury forecast which predicts that the economy will bounce back from the current downturn within two years.

In his annual Pre-Budget Report, Mr Brown laced this upbeat assessment of growth prospects next year with a £250 million ($412 million) package to prevent a winter crisis in the National Health Service. He also unveiled a series of measures aimed at closing the UK's efficiency gap with the rest of the world.

"The background to this report is the global downturn, which started in Asia and which has reverberated throughout every continent," Mr Brown said. "It has not only shifted the balance of risks in the world economy from fears about inflation to fears about growth, but has forced every country, every continent, every financial institution to cut their estimates for growth."

With the Treasury expecting the Bank of England's monetary policy committee to cut interest rates over the coming months, the Chancellor said he was cutting his growth forecast for 1999, from the 1.75-2.25 per cent expected at the time of the March Budget to 1-1.5 per cent — higher than most independent forecasters are predicting.

Mr Brown said Britain was in better shape to withstand the impact of the global downturn than in the early 1990s, adding that the strength of the public finances meant there was no need to scale down his £40 billion boost to health and education spending over the next three years. The Treasury's forecasts for spending and borrowing are being based on the more pessimistic of the two forecasts for next year.

The Chancellor stressed that the real need was to improve Britain's long-term economic performance, and sketched out his equivalent of the Conservative supply-side reforms of the 1980s in a bid to boost productivity.

Looking ahead to next March's Budget, the Chancellor proposed tax breaks to encourage small businesses to invest, a shake-up of planning law to help Britain create its own silicon valleys, an investigation into the problems faced by firms in securing bank finance, incentives for research and development, and £25 million to create eight new institutes of enterprise in British universities.

The Chancellor added that the public sector would also be expected to raise its game, with new performance targets and a drive to stamp out absenteeism, which costs the state £6 billion a year.

Announcing plans to provide tax breaks for employee share ownership, Mr Brown said: "I want to remove, once and for all, the old 'them and us' culture in industry. I want to encourage the new enterprise culture of teamwork in which everyone contributes and everyone benefits from success."

As a sign of the Government's determination to cut welfare bills and encourage work, the Chancellor extended the Working Families Tax Credit — the centrepiece of this year's Budget — to the disabled.

He told MPs that a disabled person, with one child, moving from benefits to work would have a minimum income of £220 a week, and would pay no tax on income below £274 a week.

Green lobbyists were disappointed by Mr Brown's softly-softly approach to environmental taxation, despite a call for an energy tax on firms in a report last week by the British Airways chairman, Lord Marshall.

The upbeat tone of the report prompted the Opposition leader, William Hague, and his shadow chancellor, Francis Maude, to condemn "Peter Pan economics" based on "fantasy forecasting". The Liberal Democrats' spokesman, Malcolm Bruce, said the high level of sterling was damaging manufacturing.

Some City and business experts also accused Mr Brown of being over-optimistic. The director-general of the Confederation of British Industry, Adair Turner, said: "The growth forecasts are probably on the high side, but we believe public finances are in a robust enough state to take a significant undershoot without unacceptable levels of borrowing."

Patrick Foley, economic adviser at Lloyds TSB, said: "The City will find some of the forecasts for growth are a little on the optimistic side, but they are pretty much in line with our own thinking."

Gordon Brown leaving the Treasury. He gave an upbeat assessment for growth prospects PHOTO: FIONA HANSON

Main points

- Growth to slow to between 1 and 1.5 per cent of GDP next year, rising to 2.25-2.75 per cent in 2000/2001 and 2.75-3.25 the year after
- Inflation to remain on target of 2.5 per cent
- Public sector debt to fall below 40 per cent of GDP
- £250 million additional spending on the health service this winter
- Minimum income for working lone parents with one child of £5.50 an hour and £6.37 for working lone parents with two children as a result of the introduction of Working Family Tax Credit and the Minimum Wage
- More New Deal places; 120 technology training centres to tackle skill shortages
- Tax breaks to encourage employee share ownership, research and development, small and medium-sized companies, and energy efficiency
- Review of banks' services to new businesses
- Possible £50 cut in car tax for small, clean cars
- 'Family friendly' working practices including enhanced child care provision
- 10p income tax starting rate 'when economically right to do so'

In Brief

THE BANK of England threw a lifeline to hard-pressed homeowners and businesses when it reacted to Britain's rapid descent towards recession with the sharpest cut in interest rates for five years — down a half-point to 6.75 per cent.

BRITISH Airways has suffered a 10 per cent slump in half-yearly profits, to $640 million. The management is now faced with pruning its global network and abandoning plans for bigger, luxurious jets.

SIR RICHARD Greenbury, the chairman of Marks & Spencer, declared recession on the high street after announcing the retailer's first drop in profits since 1991. He blamed a sudden consumer slump for the shock 23 per cent fall in half-year profits, to $580 million.

BRITISH Petroleum gave a boost to the north of England and Scotland with plans to invest $830 million in new chemical plants. BP plans to build new ethylene and ethanol facilities at the company's existing sites in Grangemouth and Hull.

THE Confederation of British Industry put pressure on the UK government to set a date for British entry into the single currency. Sir Clive Thompson, president of the CBI, warned ministers that companies would refuse to invest huge amounts of capital in preparation for the shift to the euro unless they were given a date for joining.

BARCLAY Capital, the investment arm of the banking giant, sacked nearly 5 per cent of its workforce following a strategic review into the losses it incurred in Russia two months ago.

KEVIN MAXWELL, son of the disgraced media tycoon Robert Maxwell, was told by a High Court judge that he had until the end of the month to make a written statement to the UK Department of Trade and Industry about the Mirror Group empire which collapsed after his father's death in 1991.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates November 9	Sterling rates November 2
Australia	2.6206-2.6238	2.6870-2.6876
Austria	19.69-19.71	19.36-19.37
Belgium	57.72-57.81	56.74-56.84
Canada	2.5441-2.5469	2.5658-2.5654
Denmark	10.63-10.65	10.46-10.47
France	9.38-9.39	9.22-9.23
Germany	2.7992-2.8014	2.7519-2.7543
Hong Kong	12.84-12.84	12.90-12.91
Ireland	1.1242-1.1264	1.1041-1.1061
Italy	2,769-2,771	2,722-2,724
Japan	201.16-201.41	191.46-191.73
Netherlands	3.1559-3.1581	3.1030-3.1055
New Zealand	3.0913-3.0966	3.1377-3.1440
Norway	12.36-12.38	12.20-12.21
Portugal	286.92-287.29	282.05-282.45
Spain	237.83-238.01	233.81-234.11
Sweden	13.10-13.12	12.93-12.95
Switzerland	2.3128-2.3154	2.2487-2.2497
USA	1.6591-1.6598	1.6674-1.6683
ECU	1.4233-1.4260	1.4013-1.4031

FTSE100 Share Index down 91.5 at 5433.6. FTSE 250 Index up 47.1 at 4934.6. Gold down $2.25 at $291.05.

Officer admits passing to the Serbs secret Nato plans for air strikes

French army too chummy with Serbs

ANALYSIS
Rémy Ourdan

COMMANDER Pierre-Henri Bunel's communication to the Serbs of secret Nato plans regarding Kosovo may have been a spectacular act of espionage, but it was also in keeping with Serb sympathies among French military officers. More surprising is the fact that Bunel's actions have been made public. Up to now, the government has always hushed up blatant examples of "dangerous liaisons" between French officers and Serbs.

There was a scandal last April when the United States press accused a French intelligence officer, Commander Hervé Gourmelon, of passing on strategic information to the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, now accused of crimes against humanity by the Hague tribunal. Gourmelon was suspected of having warned Karadzic he was about to be arrested. Paris denied the report, but repatriated the commander, later admitting that he had had a "questionable" relationship with war criminals.

Some ambiguity surrounds the Gourmelon case. He had been asked by his superiors to keep in touch with Serb extremists likely to jeopardise the peace process or even attack Western forces. But after three years in the country, Gourmelon was apparently won over to the Serb cause. Although it was his duty to talk with the Serbs, and even to pass false information to them, he often tried to convince his French superiors to adopt a conciliatory attitude towards them.

The key question in both the Bunel and Gourmelon cases is: were defence secrets passed on to the Serbs at the request of the French government? And if so, at what level was the decision taken? It seems that answers to those questions may soon emerge for the first time, since an investigating magistrate has been assigned to the Bunel case.

France, taking its cue from the late President François Mitterrand, has always had a special relationship with the Serbs. Mitterrand was the Western politician most loathed by the Bosnians. It was he who once exclaimed: "As long as I'm alive, France will never go to war against Serbia!", and who kept silent when French "blue berets", rendered helpless by an inadequate United Nations mandate, were humiliated by the Serbs.

There are several reasons for the deep-rooted pro-Serb stance of certain French army officers. First there is a military tradition: historically, the French and the Serbs have always been allies. There are also racist overtones: most Bosnian troops are Muslims. Finally, French officers prefer to talk to their own kind, and most of the former officers of the Yugoslav army are Serbs.

It is true that the Bosnian high command could be devious. But some French officers deluded themselves to the point of certifying that "at least the Serbs keep their promises", at a time when Belgrade and Pale were flouting agreements with Western emissaries before the ink was even dry.

During the siege of Sarajevo, Franco-Serb connivance usually took the form of a quiet word or two exchanged by officers, a sigh from a diplomat, or a glass of slivovitz between diplomats or soldiers.

Sometimes it erupted into the open, as when General Jean-René Bachelet, a French commander of Unprofor, backed a Serb request to alter the Dayton accord so as to avoid the reunification of Sarajevo; or when ambassador Yves Gaudeul invited Colonel Milenko Indic, who was involved in the capture and torture of French soldiers two years earlier, to an official reception.

The fact that those two incidents took place after Jacques Chirac was elected president suggests that there was no fundamental shift in Franco-Serbian relations after Mitterrand's death. Yet in Sarajevo Chirac is adored as much as Mitterrand was hated. The Bosnians have not forgotten he was the first person to order "blue helmets" to return fire when attacked in May 1995, that the rapid reaction force that bombed Serb positions was his idea, and that he was the first European leader to denounce Serb "barbarity".

But despite the change of policy at the top, army officers and diplomats continue to remain in close touch with the more radical Serbs. Bunel is not the first man to have been sanctioned. A "blue helmet", Patrick Barriot, was swiftly and discreetly discharged after he became the Paris "ambassador" of the self-proclaimed "Krajina Serb Republic".

Under Mitterrand, pro-Serb feeling in the army echoed the president's policy. It now conflicts with France's official stance — though it has to be said that, unlike the British or the Germans, Chirac and prime minister Lionel Jospin have not exactly shown themselves keen to arrest war criminals, to co-operate with the Hague tribunal, or to take a firm line with the Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic.

(November 4)

COMMANDER Pierre-Henri Bunel, pictured above in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war, has admitted that in the course of four meetings with a Serb secret agent, Jovan Milanovic, between July and October he passed on information about Nato's plan to attack Serb positions in the event of a military intervention in Kosovo. Bunel confirmed that Milanovic asked him a number of strategic questions about Nato air strikes, and admitted that he gave Milanovic a Nato document entitled "Order of Operations".

Bunel says he acted alone and was not paid. He said he was motivated by an "intellectual interest in the Balkans, sympathy for the Serb nation, and humanist feelings". He has been charged with "secret dealings with a foreign power" and is now in jail awaiting trial.

(November 5)

Poland fears its EU goal is slipping away

Jan Krauze in Warsaw

ON THE surface, everything seems fine in Warsaw. Far from being sucked into the crisis that has hit most emerging countries, Poland stands out as a shining example of economic dynamism and stability.

It was certainly rocked by the Russian crisis last summer. But both the zloty and growth (5 per cent this year) have held their ground well. It would be an exaggeration to say that the future looks rosy on the eastern front. But basically the "Russian alert" has blown over.

Warsaw's fears are now being fuelled from another quarter — the West. In the "new" Europe of 15 mostly social democratic countries, keen to spur economic recovery and reduce unemployment, Poland is worried that it could be sidelined.

This is not a new concern: for at least a year, the French government has hinted that it is in no hurry to see the European Union (EU) enlarged. The bigger worry now is that the new German government seems to be saying the same thing.

A few weeks after September's general election, the new German chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, told the Pörtschach summit in Austria that enlargement looked "much more complicated than we had originally thought" and that it was not a good idea "to delude [EU] candidates". He, too, made no secret of the fact that his priorities lay elsewhere. That caused great disappointment in Warsaw, even though it came as no real surprise. To the Polish foreign minister, Bronislaw Geremek, it was clear that "the political will [to enlarge the EU] is now weaker."

The German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, has since been dispatched to Warsaw to explain that Germany is still in favour of enlargement, and that under its EU presidency (from January to June 1999) it intends to speed up some negotiation procedures.

But Fischer was careful to qualify his remarks by saying one had to be "realistic" about the issue. Geremek replied: "Realism is a good thing, as it takes into account national interests, but we feel it needs to be combined with a dash of romanticism — EU and Nato enlargement means the unification of Europe."

Romanticism is a word that no doubt brought a smile to the lips of EU officials, particularly coming from a Pole. But it is something that Geremek, the Czech president Vaclav Havel and others have been harping on since the collapse of communism in 1989. Their position is that, without "generosity" and a minimum of enthusiasm that allows factors other than objective criteria to be taken into account, enlargement will either happen too late, not happen at all, or be bungled.

Appeals aside, Poland has also done its share of posturing over the issue. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who was the first prime minister of the post-communist era, said recently: "Poland is a proud country and won't be kept waiting indefinitely." The reality, of course, is that candidate countries have little choice but to wait until they are invited to join. At the moment Brussels has mentioned 2006 or 2007 as the "earliest" possible dates — in other words, 17-18 years after Eastern Europe ditched the communist system.

It is true that things are moving: on November 10 accession negotiations on a number of "easy" sectors will begin. But on essential issues — above all, institutional reform and the common agricultural policy — no real headway has been made.

And while eventual accession is presented, both by the applicants and the EU, as a fait accompli, the future remains uncertain. How long must each aspiring member prove the excellence of its economic stewardship, ward off successive crises, and convince public opinion, election after election, that it is worth making sacrifices for Europe?

In Poland polls show that the number of people in favour of EU membership has been dwindling steadily for several years. This raises the question of how long the government will be able to maintain its fervour for reform.

So far the present centre-right coalition has remained as pro-European as its social democratic predecessor. Since coming to power a year ago, Jerzy Buzek's government has pushed through several reforms: it has extended the responsibilities of local authorities in fewer but larger regions; it has adopted a courageous and very costly programme to restructure the mining sector; and it has announced plans to reform the pension system and the health service. But the difficult work remains to be done. Agriculture must be modernised; infrastructure improved; environmental protections brought up to EU standards.

DURING the coming election-free year, the present coalition can continue to risk unpopular reforms. But the government faces an election in 2000, and it may prove increasingly difficult to stay on course, particularly as the present coalition consists of a ragbag of neo-liberals, trade union leaders and rightwing nationalists. Last month's regional elections were edifying in this respect. They revealed the strength of the main rightwing and leftwing parties, Solidarity Electoral Action and the Democratic Left Alliance, and the relative weakness of the Freedom Union.

Although not disastrous, the setback suffered by Geremek's friends and especially supporters of Leszek Balcerowicz, the deputy prime minister responsible for finance, was clear-cut. It has not, however, prevented Balcerowicz from imposing his budget ideas and his vision of a Poland that should be girding its loins for difficult times.

But his ambitious tax reform plans have already been more or less shelved, and his authority has waned even within his own party. He and all those who believe that Poland must modernise as quickly as possible, and that the date of EU membership cannot be postponed indefinitely without serious repercussions, may pay a heavy price for the "realism" now being advocated by the EU countries.

(November 5)

Attitudes to hunger strikers start to thaw

Illegal immigrants in France have found some unlikely allies in local MPs, reports **Philippe Bernard**

FRENCH interior ministry officials have their eyes riveted on Le Havre, Bordeaux and Limeil-Brévannes, in the Paris suburbs, where groups of illegal immigrants, or *sans-papiers*, have been on hunger strike for 46, 50 and 60 days respectively.

In August 1996, when the then prime minister, Alain Juppé, decided to dislodge more than 200 sans-papiers — along with a supportive film star, Emmanuelle Béart — from a Paris church after their 50-day hunger strike, all the media were present to record this display of firm government.

Today the context is very different: 77,000 out of 142,000 sans-papiers have been regularised, and this time no film stars have run to the rescue of the 65,000 who have had their applications turned down; appeals lodged by 45,000 of them are still in the pipeline, but should mostly be processed by the end of the year.

The present tensions, which have been exacerbated by the hunger strikes, have moved a number of MPs, some of them Socialists, to soften their approach. The sponsorship of individual immigrants by people in the arts and other types of support have run out of steam, and attempts to co-ordinate the deeply divided hunger strikers have collapsed. But local elected representatives in hunger strike areas have begun to voice concern and are trying to persuade the government to be more flexible.

Even Laurent Fabius, a Socialist and a former prime minister, has promised to appeal to his prefect on a behalf of a group of sans-papiers who have occupied a hall in the commune where he is mayor.

Another Socialist, Joseph Rossignol, who is mayor of Limeil-Brévannes, has allowed 23 Africans, 11 of whom began a hunger strike in Créteil Cathedral on September 1, to stay in the council chamber.

His "irresponsible and regrettable attitude" earned him a rap on the knuckles from the executive of the Socialist Party (PS), but he is about to receive support from an unexpected quarter: an informal "monitoring committee" for sans-papiers, set up by PS, Green and Communist MPs, will visit Limeil-Brévannes to ask for the situation of the African hunger strikers to be re-examined.

Two PS members on that committee, Serge Blisko and Yann Galut, do not go as far as advocating the regularisation of all those who ask for it, since they accept that certain criteria should be met. But they want the government to "go further". "Will it take the death of a hunger striker to make us realise that this situation is untenable?" asks Blisko, who has called for the "emergency regularisation" of the strikers.

'The prefect has hinted that he would allow hunger strikers to go underground'

Twenty sans-papiers have been on hunger strike in Bordeaux since September 10; some have lost 10kg in weight and can no longer walk. "In a country where the rule of law obtains, you have to respect the law," says Georges Payronne, prefect of the Gironde. He has, however, hinted that he would allow the hunger strikers to go underground. "No one will ask for them to be deported, and I myself don't expect to."



Here again, the tensions created by some very determined hunger strikers have galvanised local representatives of the "pluralist left" into action. The PS and the Human Rights League of the Gironde, have signed an appeal together with the Communist party, the Greens and two leftwing trade unions, urging that "negotiations with a view to regularising each of the 20 persons concerned should be concluded as soon as possible". The document has been sent to the prime minister, Lionel Jospin, the interior minister, Jean-Pierre Chevènement, and the Gironde prefect.

PS activist Monique Le Merre is one of the pillars of the movement which, in Le Havre, has succeeded since March in getting 50 out of 59 sans-papiers regularised — in successive and inexplicable waves, triggered by pressure from the support committee and from sponsors.

Le Merre is mystified as to why two Mauritanians, who said their lives would be at risk if they were sent back home, were regularised as soon as they had been appointed spokesmen of the movement, while two hunger-striking compatriots, who had been in France for the same length of time, obtained nothing.

In another case, a Guinean originally denied the right of asylum ended up being regularised for "medical reasons", which he had never put forward as an argument. "They told us: 'Don't complain, the main thing is that he has been regularised'," says Le Merre.

She notes that interior ministry officials have since adopted a harder line, and thinks she knows why: "They don't want to stick their necks out. They're waiting for Chevènement to come back." On September 2, the interior minister nearly died and spent days in a coma after an operation went wrong. Now convalescing, he is due back at his desk in January.

(October 31)

Additional reporting in Bordeaux by Claudia Courtois

Defiant Nasreen looks to West for help

Jean-Baptiste Naudet

"DEATH to the ungodly Taslima Nasreen!" and "Arrest the infidel and string her up!" are the kind of cries that rise from the crowd of Muslim fanatics who demonstrate after Friday's prayers in Dhaka, capital of Bangladesh.

The object of their hatred, who had to flee Bangladesh in 1994 to escape prosecution and the wrath of fundamentalists, returned from exile on September 14 to be at the bedside of her dying mother.

Today, as in 1994, fundamentalists accuse the 35-year-old novelist of having "offended the Koran" in her books, which denounce the condition of women in Bangladesh, where nine out of 10 people are Muslim. They have once again offered anyone who kills Nasreen a reward of $5,500 — a huge sum in Bangladesh, one of the world's poorest countries.

The authorities have responded with conflicting signals: on the one hand, the justice ministry has ordered her arrest for having "hurt people's religious feelings"; on the other, the foreign minister, Abbud Saman Azad, has told Nasreen she can stay in the country with her sick mother "for humanitarian reasons". Both ministers have asked Nasreen to give herself up, but if convicted she faces a maximum of two years in jail and a fine.

Taslima Nasreen: the Salman Rushdie of Bangladesh?

The woman who has been described as the "Salman Rushdie of Bangladesh" has gone into hiding. "It's like being in prison," she laments. She has issued appeals for help by telephone and e-mail, says she is "afraid of being murdered at any time", and has demanded the protection of the Bangladeshi authorities. She has also asked Western governments to put pressure on Dhaka to protect her.

Leading figures in the West, and particularly in France, have begun to respond. Thirty of them, including Sylviane Jospin, the prime minister's wife, and the writer Elisabeth Badinter, have signed a petition asking the French government to intervene on Nasreen's behalf.

Nasreen is pinning her hopes on international pressure of this kind, as there seems to be no end to her nightmare.

One of Nasreen's major problems is that most Bangladeshi people have little time for her. The Islamic clergy heartily loathe this gynaecologist-turned-rebel, and even the feminists and the non-religious intelligentsia have been slow to come to her defence, although she won the Sakharov Prize in 1994, and is regarded as an international champion of freedom of speech.

They criticise her for relying too heavily on the international press. She is widely seen as little more than a darling of the Western media — who love a martyr — and, according to a professor of political science at Dhaka university, she's trying "to get back into the limelight . . . by putting herself across as another Salman Rushdie".

Farida Akhter, a Bangladeshi feminist, regards the fanatics' demands as "totally indefensible", but still feels that Nasreen is herself "responsible for the fact that no one has rushed to her aid".

In 1994, when the Nasreen affair first hit the headlines, the Bangladeshi feminist movement For Women felt she had gone too far. A member of that movement explained at the time that her immoderate language "had done greater harm than good to the cause she claimed to support. Now even liberals don't dare tackle the issue of women's freedom head on because they're afraid of being accused of supporting her."

Nasreen's critics feel that she has rocked the boat with her books and her "provocative" stands, causing Muslims to adopt an even harder line and jeopardising the slow process of negotiation with the Islamic clergy initiated by feminist associations in Bangladesh.

"She went too far too quickly, all on her own," says an expert observer. Yet Nasreen refuses to back down. Certain Islamists, who would prefer to take the heat out of the situation, have suggested to her that she should apologise for having insulted the Koran.

Her answer, given on French television, was uncompromising: "I don't believe in the Koran, therefore I've never said it should be changed. I've called for the abolition of the Koranic law, sharia, on the grounds that it is a discriminatory law which oppresses women in Bangladesh. I shall never apologise, as I've done nothing wrong."

(October 30)

Dumas happy to sup with the enemy

EDITORIAL

THERE was already an Elf Aquitaine scandal; now there is most definitely a Dumas scandal. The first, centred on France's biggest oil company, is in the hands of the legal authorities; the second, involving the former foreign minister, Roland Dumas, is of a political nature.

The Dumas affair is currently being played out before the "tribunal of public opinion" to which Christine Deviers-Joncour explicitly appeals in her provocatively titled book, La Putain de la République (The Republic's Whore), just published by Calmann-Lévy.

In a straightforward account, free of hypocrisy, Deviers-Joncour tells how Elf's chairman, Alfred Sirven, gave her millions of dollars via Swiss bank accounts — plus free use of a company credit card and unlimited expenses — to do just one thing: "control" Dumas, then François Mitterrand's foreign minister.

She describes herself as Sirven's "foreign ministry card", and gives numerous examples of how that "card" was used to engineer appointments, facilities, contracts, accommodations, and even a visit by President Mitterrand to a Gulf state where Elf had huge interests.

"Having a powerful emotional relationship with a man while at the same time being aware that the relationship served a financial purpose was not an easy thing to handle," Deviers-Joncour admits, before adding: "But then surely love always carries a price tag."

The trouble is that this highly-paid lobbying "job", as Deviers-Joncour describes it, was not carried out without Dumas's knowledge. Deviers-Joncour was no fleeting or occasional mistress, but the foreign minister's Parisian partner, whom he flaunted at receptions and during official trips.

It got to the point where Dumas poked fun at his "Mata Hari", and even once asked her: "Are you here for me or for Elf?" Deviers-Joncour's book, which does not touch on issues now subject to legal proceedings, publicly confirms what had already filtered out from the investigating magistrates' office: that a minister of the republic had behaved at the very least rashly in allowing his public and private life to become confused to a point where his partner was paid to lean on him on behalf of huge financial interests.

That same man is currently president of the Constitutional Council, in other words the guardian of French republican values. Surely he can't hang on to his job, now the truth is out?

(October 30)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani

Gingrich's Going May Not Please White House

ANALYSIS
David S. Broder

THE House of Representatives Newt Gingrich is leaving behind is not the same House in which he became Speaker four years ago, let alone the one to which he was elected in 1978. His legacy will be felt not only by future members of Congress but by President Clinton, who surprisingly may miss Gingrich both as a partner and an antagonist.

Those are the observations of a number of the Georgian's colleagues of both parties and students of Congress, interviewed last weekend in the aftermath of Gingrich's surprise announcement that he was stepping down.

Although his tenure was shorter than many of his predecessors, his impact on the House and American politics may prove to be much larger. His ascendancy marked not just a Republican renaissance but the emergence of the South as the new base of the GOP. He strengthened the Speaker's authority, reduced the legislative discretion of committee chairmen, empowered backbenchers — and helped make the House even more of a partisan cockpit than it had been before.

His departure may complicate life for Clinton. It robs the White House of its favorite target and at the same time deprives the president of a partner in the opposition party who was almost always willing to help on tough international issues and — at least occasionally — in cutting domestic policy deals.

Whoever succeeds him, said former representative Vin Weber, R-Minnesota, a Gingrich friend and ally, "the next leader will not be as strong as Newt or as capable of making dramatic moves. Being party leader as well as Speaker is perilous. The House members got tired of that. It was too big a burden defending him all the time. The next Speaker will run the House — period — and we won't have a party leader until we nominate our presidential candidate."

The change will be felt at the White House as well as on Capitol Hill. Ever since Gingrich led the new Republican majority in a budget confrontation that shut down major parts of the federal government over the Christmas holidays in 1995, he has been the bogeyman Democrats have used to raise money and roll up the vote. In 1996, Clinton ran for re-election against a mythical opponent named "Dole-Gingrich," and again this year, it was Gingrich's backstage management of the impeachment proceedings against Clinton that Democrats used to rally the troops.

Newt Gingrich hugs neighbour Lucia Roy in Marietta, Georgia, before he stepped down as Speaker PHOTOGRAPH: RIC FELD/AP

But the reverse of that coin, as another Gingrich intimate, Robert S. Walker, R-Pennsylvania, put it, is that "Clinton loses someone he can make a deal with. Newt had no peers in the Republican Party, so when it came time to get something done, he could usually do it, even if he had to force the process. The problem for the next speaker is that he will have many peers, people who think they are on the same level, with the same power, and they will try to drive agendas and muster forces themselves."

That difference may be particularly crucial when it comes to foreign policy. Gingrich, a student of history who spent part of his youth in France, offered what Thomas E. Mann, the Brookings Institution scholar on Congress, called "instinctive, patriotic support to a president of the opposite party on the big international questions of trade and foreign policy. There aren't many like him around."

Gingrich's departure is also likely to leave a larger vacuum than that of most of his predecessors because he was so successful in centralizing power in the speakership. "Starting with the Contract With America," Mann said, "he created the notion that the agenda for the House, and for each of its committees, was set by the party leadership — meaning himself."

Gingrich also broke the precedent of seniority determining committee chairmanships, for example, by skipping over several more experienced members to make Bob Livingston head of the House Appropriations Committee. And he picked junior members of unusual promise for spots on key policy panels.

Ironically, it was the revolt of some of those same members, who complained that he had backed away from some of the goals of the "revolution" or had stirred too much personal controversy, which undercut his position and led to his decision to step down.

Yet Republicans came to depend on his leadership — whether they agreed with his instincts or not. In the 104th Congress of 1995-96, Gingrich wielded the Contract With America to insist that legislation reflect the party's agenda. But even in the last Congress, when committee chairmen began to reassert their prerogatives, Gingrich still flexed his muscle.

THE overthrow of the old order in the House was signaled on Gingrich's first day as Speaker, when a package of radical rules changes was approved in a marathon session that ran well past midnight. The most significant change set a six-year limit on tenure of committee chairmen and an eight-year limit for the Speaker. The rules also cut the size of committee staffs, banned proxy voting, and applied federal employment and antidiscrimination laws to Congress itself.

But in other respects, Gingrich's tenure marked a further rush toward partisanship in the House, not just in his being disciplined by the House in 1997 and forced to pay a $300,000 penalty, but in a consistent pattern of party-line voting.

With the balance of power between the parties in the House even narrower now than it has been during Gingrich's four years, that sharp partisan edge may be his most lasting legacy.

Zyuganov Assailed Over Anti-Semitism

David Hoffman in Moscow

COMMUNIST Party leader Gennady Zyuganov has come under a wave of criticism for openly anti-Semitic remarks made by a member of his parliamentary faction, who said "yids" were responsible for Russia's economic malaise.

An ailing President Boris Yeltsin last week denounced Zyuganov and said he was "indignant" at the Communists' "aggressive" remarks. "What has happened has not been evident in Russia for many years," Yeltsin said in a statement from Sochi, where he is recuperating from a series of illnesses.

The remarks were made by Gen. Albert Makashov at a rally on October 4 in Samara, southeast of Moscow. Since then, the Communists have been under pressure to take action against Makashov, but Zyuganov has resisted, saying Makashov had received an internal party reprimand, which was enough.

Makashov is an outspoken extremist who was jailed in 1993 for his part in an armed attempt to storm a television station during Yeltsin's violent confrontation with parliament. He later received amnesty.

The lower house of parliament, the State Duma, in which the Communists are the largest faction, refused to admonish Makashov. A mild, compromise resolution, which said Makashov's remarks "provoked concern," drew only 107 votes, far short of the 226 votes needed to pass. Most of the 132-member Communist faction voted against the resolution or abstained.

Anti-Semitism has a long history in Russia and the Soviet Union, but the latest controversy has a contemporary subtext because many of the new Russian financial tycoons are Jewish. They control two of the three major Russian television networks, whose leading anchors and commentators have also been a target of the Communists' wrath in recent weeks.

The devaluation of the ruble in August has triggered economic hardship in the Russian provinces, and Makashov's remarks seem aimed at stirring up racial and ethnic resentments toward wealthy Jews. In his original remarks, Makashov said reformers should be "put in the dock," and he complained there were "no Russians in the government, although 85 percent of the population of our country is made up of indigenous Russians." Zyuganov has repeated the Communist Party slogan that the party stands for "friendship and brotherhood among the people," but his refusal to denounce Makashov has provoked sharp criticism.

Boris Berezovsky, one of the leading financiers, who also plays a key role in Russia's largest television channel, denounced Zyuganov after the Duma vote. "The Communist Party placed itself outside the laws of the civilized world by virtually supporting the anti-Semitic statements of Gen. Makashov," he told the Interfax news agency.

Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, a presidential contender who has been a frequent ally of the Jewish community here, said Makashov's comments were "wild, Neanderthal and could very well destroy that which has still been preserved in the Russian Federation — inter-ethnic contacts, inter-ethnic accord."

Yeltsin capped the criticism with his statement, saying that "any attempt to insult ethnic feelings or limit the rights of citizens for ethnic reasons will be cut short". He vowed that "extremism will not take the upper hand in Russia."

● Russia and the United States reached agreement last week on a food aid package to help Russia through the winter in the wake of a poor harvest and hardship caused by devaluation of the ruble and skyrocketing prices of imported food.

The U.S. food aid envisioned in three protocols signed here comprises more than 3 million tons of wheat and foodstuffs, officials said.

The first agreement calls for the United States to advance a $600 million loan for the purchase of 1.5 million tons of food, including 500,000 tons of corn, 300,000 tons of soybean meal, 200,000 tons of soybeans, 200,000 tons of wheat and 100,000 tons of rice. It also would pay for 120,000 tons of beef, 50,000 tons of pork and 30,000 tons of nonfat dry milk, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said.

In the second agreement, the United States said it would donate 1.5 million tons of wheat to Russia, which will be processed into flour and sold on the Russian market. The third agreement calls for humanitarian aid of 100,000 tons of food, to be delivered directly to Russia's regions and charities, many of which are facing a difficult winter, after one of Russia's worst harvests in half a century.

The United States is to provide $260 million for food transportation. The supplies will start coming in December and continue for the first half of 1999, officials said.

No Circus, No Empty Tent

EDITORIAL

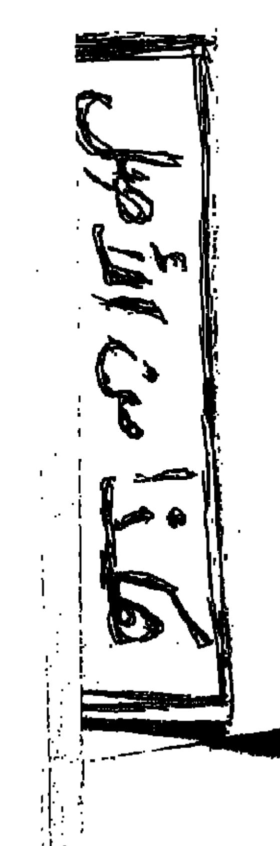
BY THEIR showing in last week's election, congressional Republicans are suddenly in full retreat from the prospect of presidential impeachment. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Henry Hyde has announced that the committee would try to avoid significant new fact-finding by asking President Clinton to stipulate to a series of facts. He said the committee's only major witness might be Kenneth Starr. Other Republicans, who only recently were stressing their constitutional obligation to examine evidence of possibly impeachable offenses, now talk of the need to put this matter to rest.

This little two-step forces the question of whether the Republicans were ever sincere in their professed consternation about the Monica Lewinksy affair. We believe they were correct in stressing the importance of the inquiry, and it should therefore take more than a setback in last week's election to curtail it. Mr. Hyde argued that the planned proceedings were not a response to the vote but a judgment about the best way to move forward expeditiously and rigorously. It's a tough sell.

Avoid re-investigation by asking the White House to stipulate to the matters of fact? Sure. But this strategy can take the committee only so far. The factual record that now exists is not conclusive on certain key points, particularly whether President Clinton instructed Betty Currie to retrieve from Ms. Lewinsky gifts he had given her. Congress cannot avoid these questions, whatever the chances of their being answered authoritatively.

To be sure, the vote does seem to convey a lack of popular enthusiasm for the impeachment process. So much the better if this prompts second thoughts among members of Congress who had been planning to expand the inquiry into a political circus involving FBI files, the White House travel office and all the rest. It should also encourage members to deal with this matter quickly and fairly.

But before this process ends, the House must produce a factual record, a characterization of the president's conduct and a vote on that characterization. This was, and remains, the members' duty. Anything less will be an abdication and a sham.



South Asia Sanctions Lifted

Thomas W. Lippman

PRESIDENT Clinton has decided to lift most of the economic sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan after their nuclear weapons tests last May to reward them for recent steps toward nuclear control agreements and to encourage them to do more, administration officials said last week.

Clinton notified the prime ministers of both countries by letter that he was exercising authority granted by Congress last month to waive the sanctions. Before Congress acted, the U.S. sanctions were inflexible and indefinite, a fact cited by U.S. officials and by India and Pakistan as an obstacle to negotiations.

Clinton's decision follows six months of intensive diplomacy by Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and other U.S. officials aimed at heading off a nuclear arms race in volatile South Asia.

Recently, Talbott said the nuclear standoff between the South Asian rivals threatened "an apocalypse. Even if they don't unleash that ultimate catastrophe, India and Pakistan are straining at the starting blocks of a ruinously expensive arms race."

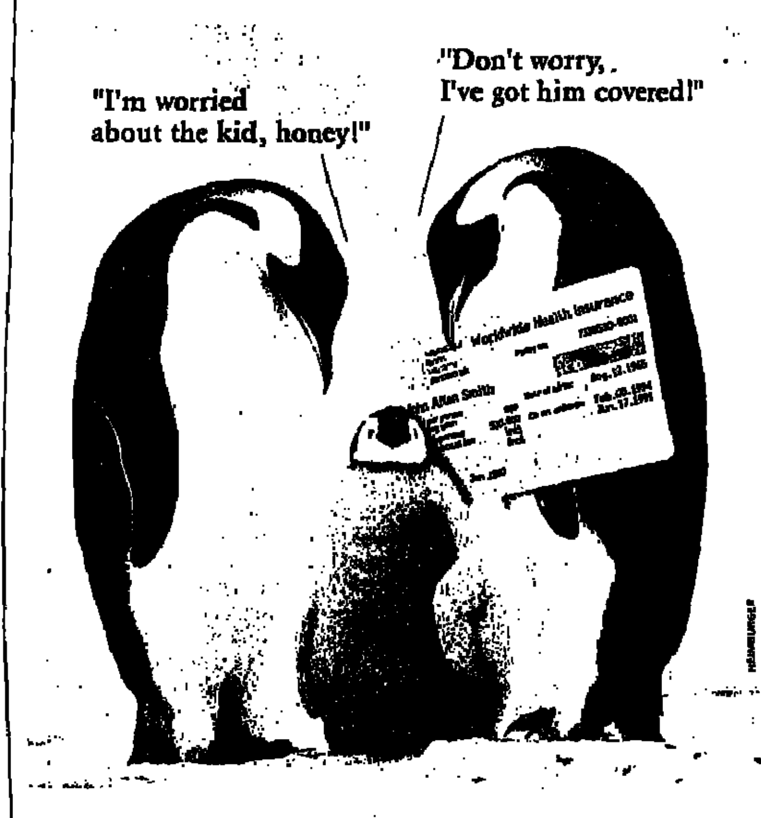
Nevertheless, officials cited steps taken by both countries toward accommodation with the international arms control system, including voluntary moratoriums on further tests. They have also committed to adhering to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; have begun taking part in negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapons; have resumed their direct dialogue about the disputed territory of Kashmir; and held their first bilateral discussions on the nuclear issue, U.S. officials said.

In response, Clinton has decided to allow U.S. trading organisations to participate in deals in both countries, U.S. officials said. He is also due to authorize the resumption of International Military Education and Training programs in both countries.

The U.S. sanctions and restrictions on funding by international development banks have had a marginal impact on India but have brought impoverished Pakistan to the brink of default on its international debt, U.S. officials said. For that reason, Clinton has also authorized U.S. officials to approve international bank loans and a debt restructuring agreement with the International Monetary Fund, provided Pakistan reaches agreement on a credible debt reform program.

Left in place are bans on military equipment sales to both countries, restrictions on export items that could have military applications and U.S. objections — which amount to a veto — to development project lending to India by international lending institutions.

The two countries' nuclear tests threatened to undermine the framework of international nuclear arms control agreements. India challenged the legitimacy of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which specifies that only the five declared nuclear powers, the U.S., Russia, China, France and Britain, are allowed to possess nuclear weapons.



Scientists Isolate Self-Replenishing Cell

Rick Weiss

SCIENTISTS announced last week that they had achieved one of the most coveted goals in biology by isolating from human embryos and fetuses a primitive kind of cell that can grow into every kind of tissue, including muscle, bone and brain.

The long-awaited discovery of so-called human embryonic stem cells — the primordial human cells that give rise to all the specialized tissues in a developing fetus — was hailed by researchers as a landmark event with vast biomedical potential.

The cells multiply tirelessly in laboratory dishes, offering a self-replenishing supply from which scientists hope to grow replacement tissues for people with various diseases, including bone marrow for cancer patients, neurons for people with Alzheimer's disease, and pancreatic cells for people suffering from diabetes.

Already, researchers have used the stem cells to grow human heart muscle cells that beat in unison in a laboratory dish, as well as blood cells, blood vessel cells, bone, cartilage, neurons and skeletal muscle.

But the cells are controversial because they offer embryologists a relatively simple method for creating "designer" babies bearing specific genetic traits that would become part of a child's permanent genetic lineage.

The discovery also threatens to reopen the debate over human cloning, since one of the simpler ways to grow transplantable replacement tissues from the new cells would call for a patient to be partially cloned.

And in the political arena, the new work has reignited a smoldering debate over a four-year-old congressional ban on the use of federal funds for human embryo research. With the therapeutic potential of embryonic cells suddenly very real, advocates are calling for a re-examination of that ban, saying the development of lifesaving applications will be hindered if federal dollars remain off-limits.

Such a re-examination would pit anti-abortion forces and other supporters of the funding ban against a powerful biomedical research lobby that has, in recent years, become increasingly popular with Congress and the public.

Experts warned that significant work remains to be done before the findings can be translated into useful therapies. Scientists know little about how to get stem cells to become one kind of cell or another. They've had some success getting them to become neurons or heart cells by adding specific hormones. But for the most part they must simply watch for the desired kind of cells to erupt out of a mass of multiplying stem cells, then tease them away to be grown on their own.

The ability to purify single cell types will be crucial. In one set of experiments done in another lab, batches of cardiac cells grown from mouse stem cells were injected into the hearts of living mice. A few contaminating stem cells must have been present, scientists said, because along with the new cardiac tissue, other tissues began to grow out of the hearts.

When Tom Met Sally

OPINION
Ellen Goodman

IT MAY be that every generation gets the Thomas Jefferson it deserves. The Jefferson of my childhood was the face on the nickel and Mount Rushmore, the signature on the Declaration of Independence. The Jefferson of today is one of DNA tests, sex, scandal, hypocrisy, the Jefferson between the William and the Clinton.

At last, DNA tests have proved that the third president of the United States had an "improper relationship" with Sally Hemings — as if the relationship of master and slave were not improper enough. This founding father was the father of at least one of her children.

The old rumor, now a certainty, has opened up enough possibilities to tease contemporary minds and bewilder textbook writers.

To some, including two men writing in Nature where the DNA conclusions are reported, this is scientific proof of his flawed humanity: "Our heroes — and especially presidents — are not gods or saints, but flesh-and-blood humans, with all of the frailties and imperfections that this entails."

To others, it's more testimony to the colorful history of an America that extends, like a rainbow, from the era when there were laws against miscegenation to the multicultural society of Tiger Woods. It was Jefferson after all who wrote that "amalgamation produces a degradation" while all the while "amalgamating."

For still others, what matters is Tom and Sally. Was this a 38-year love affair between Jefferson and the half sister of his late wife, as romantic as it was doomed? As one visitor to Monticello asked, "If they were in love, what could they do?"

We remain more interested in the personal than the political. More fascinated by the sex than the economics of relationships. It is Sally Hemings' story, not those of Jefferson's other 200 slaves, that has struck our imagination. We want to know, in some perverse way, whether it was — how do I say this? — consensual sex. Whether she was a slave or just a slave for love.

As a slave owner, Thomas Jefferson could have gotten away with her murder. What is the possibility of a voluntary relationship, a love affair between property and property owner? Are we so riveted on private affairs that we have forgotten how much they are governed by impersonal forces? By the world outside?

Thomas Jefferson apparently allowed the children he had with Sally Hemings to "escape." He freed one in his will. But he never gave Sally the freedom to stay or leave.

In the world of our founding fathers, free women had legal rights somewhere between slaves and free men. When these founders proclaimed "all men are created equal" they meant men.

Free wives were not property, nor could they own property. Sally was promised the freedom of her children, but free wives knew they would lose children in divorce. And when slaves were emancipated, the men were granted the legal status of their former masters; the women were granted the second-class citizenship of their former mistresses.

Can we truly love in captivity? There is no evidence that Jefferson and Hemings were Tom and Sally, that they transcended the master and slave relationship to become loving companions. Nothing, that is, beyond our own romantic images and a wish born out of contemporary dismay at the abuse of power is what should be love.

Today, we have come to believe in the connection between love and equality. Too much dependency, too much power makes us suspicious. How can a man know if he is loved or just feared? Can a dependent woman know if she loves or fears?

In our contemporary scandals we focus on the line between consensual sex and sexual harassment because of our own consensus that love is based on mutuality.

There was no "free love" for Tom and Sally because there was no freedom. Even in this scandal-obsessed generation, the issue isn't that Thomas Jefferson had sex with Sally Hemings. It's that he owned her. All the rest is the stuff of DNA and novels.

American Justice Goes on Trial in China

John Pomfret in Beijing

BANK teller Roberta Ramo was counting money on a summer afternoon last year, when a man with a bandanna over his face and a gun stuck in his belt appeared in front of her with a note: "Fill these here bags in 10 seconds or I'll blow you away".

Thus began, with Perry Mason-style tension, a program to teach Chinese jurists about the U.S. and German legal systems.

In front of an audience of judges, legal scholars and prosecutors gathered from throughout China, American and German judges and lawyers tried two identical cases in the first moot court presentation by Westerners for their Chinese counterparts. The Americans brought in a big American flag and the seal of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois to give their half of the affair an air of authenticity. It wasn't 12 Angry Men, but they put on a good show.

The week-long moot court in a cavernous auditorium in the Beijing Supreme People's Court illustrated the recent strides made by China's legal system. Reform of the legal system is perhaps one of the hottest topics today among Chinese who are interested in political reform. The Ford Foundation and the American Bar Association, co-sponsors of the program, have been trying for three years to get China's approval to put on this demonstration.

"This is an important development," said Ramo, the "bank teller" who is actually a past president of the American Bar Association. "The idea of seeing an American courtroom in the Beijing's People's Court, well, it's kind of mind-blowing."

But China, experts say, still has a long way to go in reforming its legal system. The human rights organization Amnesty International estimates 2,000 people are in jail here for political crimes, 250 of them because of participation in the student-led protests around Tiananmen Square in 1989 that were crushed by the Army. Some 230,000 people are being held in labor camps, and police still retain the power to sentence people to three years in a labor camp without a trial. Torture occurs routinely even though in 1987 China signed the international Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

A living example of China's legal weakness sat outside the high court during the American-German program. A woman silently protested the sentencing of her son, a minor, apparently without a public trial. She was chased off by police.

As is often the case with these exchanges, everybody learns a little about everyone else. In the criminal case, for example, equipped with the same facts, a three-judge German panel convicted a man of bank robbery. An American-style jury of 12, with a prominent Filipino journalist, American students and a woman who had served as the forewoman on a double murder trial in Oakland, California, acquitted him.

Many Chinese in the audience, noting that their judicial system is closer in form to Germany's in its reliance on judges, expressed amazement at the American jury system, and its dependence on common citizens to determine guilt.

"We've grown up with the idea that experts have to decide everything for us," said Li Guoru, 27, a doctoral law candidate at Beijing University. "To see the jury deliberate this case was really amazing. It's incredible to us that normal people are given this responsibility, to vote their conscience, to decide what's right and wrong."

Li and others also expressed wonder at the US's ban on illegal searches. In the American criminal case, a police officer, finding one of the alleged bank robbers at a bus station, searches him and finds a gun and betting slips. The gun was entered as evidence, but the betting slips were thrown out by the judge.

The American cast of characters seems to have walked straight out of a TV serial. Terence MacCarthy is a gruff, bear-like Irish American. The executive director of the Federal Defender Program in northern Illinois, he played the public defender, tossing out such lines as "Where's the beef?" and "My client is guilty. Guilty of being stupid," to a somewhat uncomprehending Chinese audience.

As the prosecutor, there was Ralph Martin, the smooth-talking, Shakespeare-quoting, Republican district attorney from Suffolk County, Massachusetts. Martin recently achieved national prominence when his office indicted MIT's Phi Gamma Delta fraternity for manslaughter in the drinking death of MIT freshman Scott Krueger. Martin made the trip to China because he is running unopposed for re-election.

"The purpose of this is to show that the rule of law protects everybody," Martin said. "As their legal system develops, [the Chinese] will not just focus on punishment, they will have to begin focusing on protecting rights."

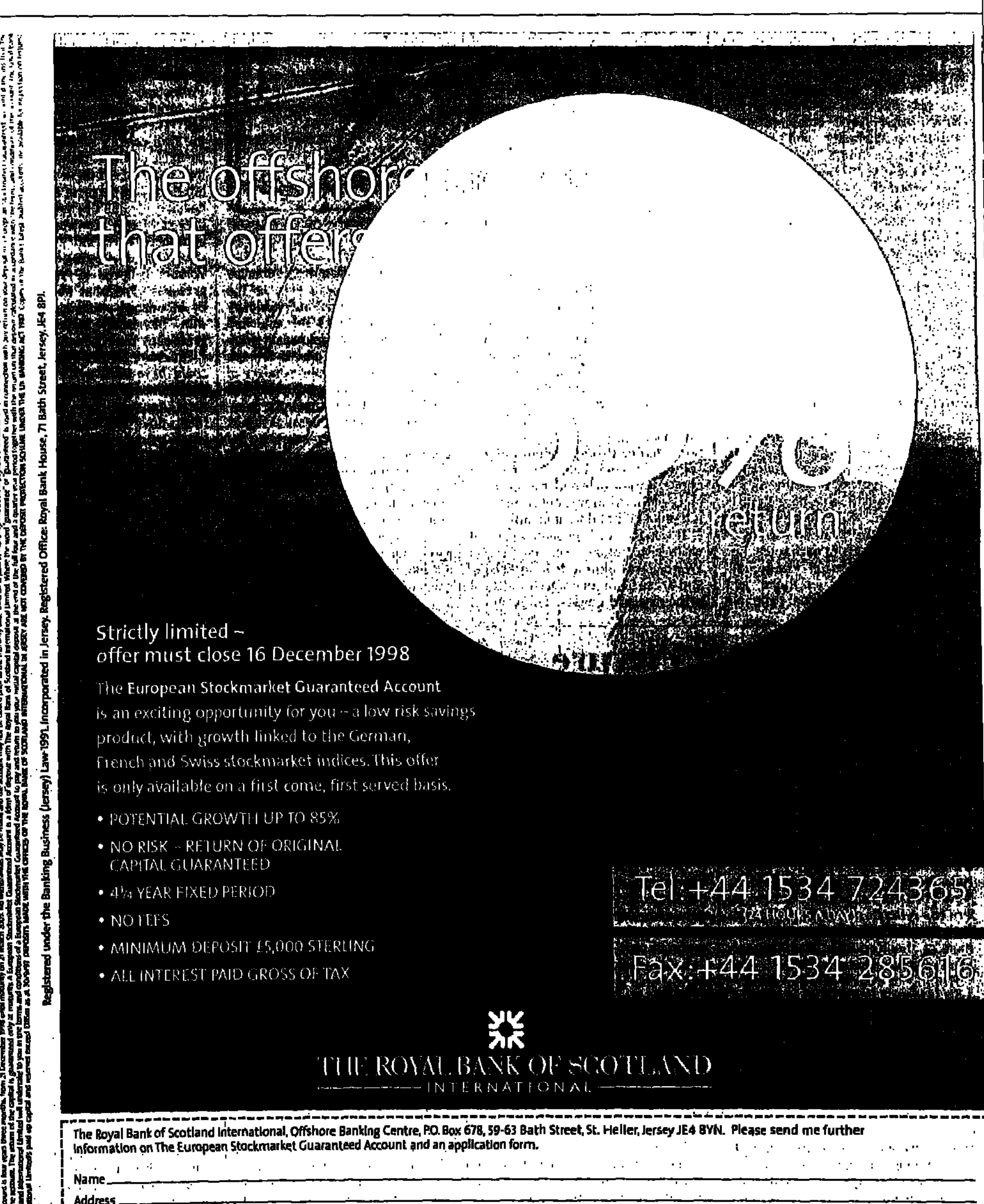
Sometimes during the week-long seminar, it appeared the two sides were talking past each other. In a question period following the American moot court, one Chinese jurist asked MacCarthy a simple question: If you are too conscientious in defending your client, will the police give you any trouble?

MacCarthy and the other Americans didn't seem to get the question. In China, police have been known to threaten defense lawyers with jail or beatings.

Sometimes the Americans seemed more optimistic about recent talk of legal reform than their Chinese colleagues.

Wendy Locks, an American lawyer studying China's legal system at Beijing University, listed a series of changes to China's criminal codes. One mandates that suspects have a right to see a lawyer. Another protects suspects against torture. A third mandates that prosecutors show suspects a card detailing their rights. "They're trying, they're beginning. It's all new," she said.

A Chinese legal scholar, listening to Locks, remarked softly: "They still can do anything they want."



Of Marvels and Monsters

John Crowley

WONDERS AND THE ORDER OF NATURE
1150-1750
By Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park
Zone. 511pp. $34



ILLUSTRATION FROM "WONDERS AND THE ORDER OF NATURE"

"IT'S NOT that I'm curious," my great-aunt Anne used to say, "I just want to know." She was expressing an age-old disapproval of curiosity that has roots in the Church Fathers, particularly Augustine. Curiosity was a form of lust, a wandering cupidity of the eye and the mind as potentially sinful as that of the body. Not only are we not to be curious about our neighbors' business and things that don't concern us; we should avoid peering uselessly and impertinently into God's creation as well. The appropriate emotion when contemplating creation was wonder, which marvels but does not seek to pry. How these two complementary impulses, curiosity and wonder, changed meanings, moral worth, objects and consequences over the course of eight or 10 centuries is the hugely ambitious subject of this large, handsome and endlessly intriguing book.

Wonders have a history, and different sorts of things have counted as wonders at different times. What counts as the order of nature changes, and what sticks out from, tests, transcends or violates that order has to change as well. Medieval writers generally considered that marvels were frequent in faraway places but rare in the center of the world (that is, the Mediterranean countries). Somewhere in Africa or Asia or the Antipodes were races of people with dog's heads, or whose heads grew below their shoulders, or trees that bore gourds inside which were perfect little lambs. In far-off Ireland, there were geese that grew from barnacles. For all the medieval writer knew, anything was possible out there, and there was no philosophical principle that could hinder God's creativity.

But there were other kinds of wonders, and other forms of wonder, that were more problematic. If lots of far-off wonders showed God's creative powers, individual wonders close at hand might portend God's anger. Conjoined twins, two-headed cows, meteors and double suns were "monsters" or "portents" or "prodigies," all words indicating that something was being shown or predicted or brought about, usually something very bad. The question about stories of wonders and monsters of this kind was not so much Is it true? as What does it mean?

It was the study of some medieval writers to make wonders cease. Wonder was akin to fear and shock and arose from ignorance of general principles and causes. The contrast between those who know and those who don't is constant from Albertus down to the present, even as the valuation of wonder and curiosity changes: Sometimes the elite and the educated can appreciate wonders that common people are too coarse to marvel at — wonders of art, rare gems, automata, coral, sea shells — and sometimes the ignorant and the vulgar marvel at things that the philosopher knows to be part of the order of nature and therefore not wonders at all.

As jampacked with stuff as the great collections of the Renaissance princes which are among its continuing subjects, Wonders And The Order Of Nature defies summary; reading it and trying to keep in mind the constantly and subtly shifting meanings of a dozen or so key terms is dizzying but fun. The same themes and problems, even the same wonders and the same remarks about them, return again and again in a sort of tidal fashion that can be lulling as well as delightful. But at length a vital historical argument comes clear.

It is a common assumption that the taming of wonders and the ceasing of miracles proceed steadily as human kind "grows up." The authors show that wonders never ceased, that the rationalist savants of the Age of Enlightenment never even began a thorough program of explaining away the accumulated wonders of the centuries, and that the very idea of a human "childhood" transcended by the growth of science is itself an Enlightenment myth.

In fact, the intellectual establishment of Europe in the 18th century was reacting to a century of turmoil and terror, in which wonders — portents, prodigies and monsters — were used in the overthrowing of prelates and princes, Catholic and Protestant. But skeptics have been as common as enthusiasts in any age. The Emperor Frederick II in the 13th century sent to Ireland for barnacle-covered driftwood, wrote that "none . . . of these shellfish exhibit[ed] any form of a bird," and decided he didn't believe the story. Robert Moray, however, in the enlightened 17th century, thought he saw tiny birds growing in the shells. Voltaire believed in "maternal impression": Pregnant women scared by bloodshed could have children with bloodstain birthmarks. My great-aunt Anne thought so too.

An entire further volume, in fact, could have been written about the persistence of wonders in 19th-century America: the discovery of "deep time" and its wonders (dinosaurs, mammoths); and the history of "freaks" displayed for the sake of entertainment, exotic thrills and uncanny fear. Maybe the contrary valuations of wonder, curiosity, amazement and the marvelous are not actually historical at all but cognitive programs with a certain maximum of alternative outcomes — programs running on that marvel of marvels, the human brain.

Getting the Big Picture

James T. Patterson

AN AMERICAN CENTURY
By Harold Evans
Knopf. 720pp. $50

HAROLD EVANS, a well-known British journalist and publisher, first came to the United States in 1956, whereupon he spent a year crisscrossing the country. Since 1984 he has lived and worked in New York. An American Century offers his reflections on the 100 years between 1889, the centenary of the start of the Republic, and the collapse of communism in 1989.

Hoping to reach a wide readership, Evans explains that he has tried to write an "accessible popular political history." Photographs, illustrations, biographies and brief narrative sections combine to create what he calls self-contained "modular units." The casual reader, he adds, "can dip into any spread of pages and absorb what he or she chooses without having to begin at the beginning: history for browsers."

He has indeed produced an accessible history. Evans writes engagingly and has an excellent ear for apt anecdotes and quotations. Most of his biographical essays — which feature all the presidents from Benjamin Harrison through Ronald Reagan, as well as many other figures — are gems of description. And they include a wide range of people from sea power advocate Adm. Alfred Thayer Mahan and the black nationalist Marcus Garvey to Malcolm X, Oliver North, Harvey Milk, and Betty Friedan.

Like Arthur Schlesinger Jr., whom he cites frequently, Evans celebrates the many great things — notably in the realm of foreign policy during the Cold War, and in the realm of civil rights in the 1960s — that Americans have accomplished during this century. Yet Evans, a liberal, also wishes that Americans had more often lived up to their ideals of equality and justice for all. Thus he opens his account by deploring the exploitation and violence that nearly destroyed American Indian culture in the late 19th century. His second chapter, which praises the populists of the 1890s, employs the sub-headline "Money Shouts," followed by a commentary on social Darwinism labeled "Survival of the Fattest."

In the same vein, Evans regularly laments the defeats of reformers, such as Eugene Debs, who struggled to promote equality. Many of Evans's vivid short essays — on the Homestead Strike of 1892, the Pullman strike of 1894, the Scottsboro Boys case, the murders of Emmett Till and of Medgar Evers — remind us that poor people and minorities suffered grievous injustices during the "American Century."

Evans clearly admires America's best-known liberal leaders, especially Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and (for his domestic policies) Lyndon Johnson. Others who receive Evans's praise include Joseph Welch, who helped to unmask the demagogic Sen. Joe McCarthy; and the many people (Dean Acheson, Robert Lovett, George Kennan, and — yes — Ronald Reagan) who stood steadfast during the long Cold War. By contrast, Evans dismisses such icons as Malcolm X — much overrated as a force for change — and the Black Panthers, who "operated more as a criminal gang than dedicated revolutionaries."

When Evans takes the time to explore a major historical question in some depth, he can be a shrewd and able guide. An extended commentary on America's acquisition of overseas possessions in 1898 sifts thoughtfully through contentious historical interpretations and concludes that "moralizing, not [economic] greed, was the most real thing about American foreign policy in 1898." The United States, he says, acquired an "Accidental Empire." But in trying to cover so much, Evans often stops short of serious analysis. We read about Rosie the Riveter but are not told whether she was typical of women workers during World War II or whether the war should be regarded as a key force in driving subsequent increases in female employment. I wish especially that Evans had found more space to explore the causes of a central topic of The American Century: the extraordinary expansion of the economy, especially after 1945. Such an exploration might have analyzed the role of the petrochemical industry, defense spending after World War II, the boom in automobiles, the Highway Act of 1956, the economic growth of the Southwest, and the impact (if any) of the computer.

In piecing together his book, Evans generously credits research assistants. Alas, he and they are a bit unlucky to have me as a reviewer. Evans misrepresents what I said in a book about poverty over time, and lists me as the author of a volume that I did not write. Still, I enjoyed Evans's lively, intelligently argued book and lingered over the wonderful photographs. It will grace my coffee table.

Paperback

Nonfiction

99 Lives: Cats in History, Legend and Literature, by Howard Loxton (Chronicle, $17.95)

DESPITE unfair bad press, cats have always had partisans among the literary and artistic set. Baudelaire was nutty about them. Raymond Chandler considered his Persian, Taki, his "feline secretary." Poe wrote with his, a tortoiseshell named Catarina, perched on his shoulder. Edward Lear, when he moved, built a new house identical to the old, so that his aging cat, Foss, wouldn't feel dislocated. When Henri Matisse was confined to bed, his faithful black cat kept him company. This book, by British cat expert Howard Loxton, explores the habits, personality, lore and appeal of man's other, more independent best friend — whom, Victor Hugo said, "God made . . . to give humankind the pleasure of caressing the tiger."

The Experts Speak: The Definitive Compendium of Authoritative Misinformation, by Christopher Cerf and Victor Navasky (Villard, $15)

THIS big book of wrongheaded pronouncements naturally includes calming quotations from economists who thought the stock market was just fine in 1929, but also leaps forward to another crash when the naysayers went too far: "The message of October, 1987, should not be taken lightly," said one Robert R. Prechter. "The great bull market is over." In fact, as the authors point out, the market came back for a 10-year streak of bullishness that may or may not be over now. It's one thing to be wrong, quite another to commit one's ravings to print. For sheer looniness it is hard to beat this statement from an American Nazi newspaper circa 1940: "Quite a number of people . . . describe the German classical author, Shakespeare, as belonging to English literature, because — quite accidentally born at Stratford-on-Avon — he was forced by the authorities to write in English."

How to Improve Your Odds Against Cancer, by John F. Potter (Lifetime Books, $14.95)

THERE is perhaps no word more frightening than "cancer," a disease whose choice of victim can seem perilously random. Who gets it, and why? Is it all an environmental and genetic crap shoot? Surgical oncologist John Potter, founder of the Lombardi Cancer Research Center at Georgetown University, aims in this no-nonsense book to put such fears in perspective. "I have seen the ravages which cancer can inflict," Potter writes. "Fortunately, I can also tell you positively that you can decrease your chances of developing cancer by adopting a healthy pattern of living." After discussing the biology of the disease, he moves on to the roles that genetics, tobacco, alcohol, diet, sun, chemicals and drugs play in the development of cancer; the psychology of cancer prevention; guidelines for early detection, including warning signs and how to do self-exams, which can be vital to successful treatment. He also advocates taking early and aggressive action if you do receive a cancer diagnosis. The bottom line, in Potter's view: "Cancer, in many of its forms, is a controllable and curable disease."

PhD students spend years working like slaves, with no pay, and no guarantee of a job at the end. **Ouida Taaffe** wonders why they bother

Labours of love

WOULD YOU choose to spend three or four years of your adult life (and possibly more) living on the breadline and working in isolation just to gain a title? Of course not. Who would?

It may seem like a ludicrous suggestion, but for those who write a doctoral thesis it can, in the worst-case scenario, be an accurate description of what they do with their time. So, why embark on a PhD?

Down in the basement, where the PhD students who have made it to "writing up" huddle over their computer screens, the verdict was unanimous. They did a doctorate for love. They had a trainspotterish obsession with Plato's dialogues, Hesse's understanding of Hegel, or revisionist Marxist theory that neither the drizzle of financial misery, nor the cold winds of social isolation could shift.

They were doing a PhD because it made them happy. These are people who are not pretending when they say they are fascinated by semiotic theory. Their eyes light up when the librarian brings them the big, heavy pile of dusty books they ordered. They enjoy sitting down to write about theodicy. Yes, they even know what it is.

But these are unworldly arts students. Science students, surely, are more pragmatic than this. After all, their courses are fact-based, hands-on and can lead directly to employment. However, take the lift to the eighth floor and the chemistry lab and things are essentially no different. Crouched over computer screens, nursing cups of coffee, they talk about the "buzz of discovery" and "loving what they do despite the huge sacrifice".

How much of a sacrifice is it? What keeps people living on a pittance and drinking lukewarm machine coffee over several years while all their peers are out getting a life? What is doing a PhD like?

The denizens of the computing room in the basement and the chemistry lab on the eighth floor took between three and four years to reach the "writing up" stage. This was three or four years of trying to ask the right questions and answer them. Three or four years of sitting alone in the library, or over a graph, hoping for inspiration. Three or four years of scribbling reams of notes.

'These people are not pretending when they say that they are fascinated by semiotic theory'

Most of them, in fact, devoted more time to the PhD on a daily basis than others do to a paid career. This, of course, is partly due to time pressure — funding, if you have it, is limited to three years. That is hardly news. What may come as a surprise, however, is that most found doing a PhD a real emotional roller coaster. Vasilios Stavros, who is completing a PhD in chemical physics at King's College, London, compared the "depression" of not getting hoped-for results with the "adrenalin rush" of things actually working out.

OLIVER PRESTON

Arts students go through the same steep ups and downs. Few are as consistently calm as Dr Raphael Woolf, who now teaches philosophy at the University of Liverpool. Before doing his PhD he was an auditor in the City of London and found studying for a doctorate "incredibly civilised". Where every day in accountancy was "difficult and boring", he found a PhD "enjoyable" and "a nice way to spend a few years".

It can, then, be personally fulfilling too. What, however, are the gains? After all, it stops you earning money for several years and only a minority of people who do a PhD actually go on to become academics. As Sherridan Hughes, consultant occupational psychologist at Career Analysts points out, it can even be counter-productive. A Masters tends to be viewed positively, but a PhD in a non-vocational subject will not necessarily lend weight to a CV. It may be seen by prospective employers as "self-indulgent", too "ivory-tower", or as a "delaying tactic".

Humanities research, in particular, has direct, practical application only in academic work and information- and library-based careers. Dr Clara Seeger, for example, who deals in equities for the investment bank Warburg Dillon Read, does not use factual knowledge gained from her PhD in German literature in her day-to-day work.

However, she values the education it gave her and feels that the skills that the PhD fostered, such as self-discipline, independence of thought, stamina, and determination, are vital to her role.

Dr Woolf, on the other hand, sees the gains as "intangible" but the experience as a "privilege". As far as he was concerned, doing a PhD was something with only "a very tenuous link to any career. It provided me with an education, rather than with new CV skills."

There is much to be said for a PhD if you really love getting to grips with the nitty-gritty of a particular problem. However, it does help if you are slightly obsessive, have manic-depressive tendencies and don't care too much about money.



Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for appointment to the following posts:

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Mathematics
(*Ref*: UBD/80)

Suitable applicants in the field of Mathematics with research and teaching experience in the following areas Analysis, Numerical Analysis, Computer Science, Statistics and Operations Research, and other areas of Applied Mathematics. Ability to teach different courses in Mathematics at the undergraduate level would be an advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Critical and Creative Thinking (*Ref*: UBD/81)

Applicants should have postgraduate qualifications and teaching and research experience in Informal Logic, Critical and Creative Thinking and Argument Analysis. Knowledge of non-Western alternatives to rational discourse is preferred. In addition, competence in non-linear discursive approaches, e.g. lateral thinking and creative thinking, would be sought. Ability to teach both in English and Malay would be an advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Sociology/Anthropology
(*Ref*: UBD/82)

Applicants should be prepared to contribute to the development of new programs in sociology and anthropology. They should be willing to teach introductory courses in either of the two disciplines as well as core courses in the methodology and theory of the social sciences. In addition, applicants with a background in anthropology should be qualified to teach courses in one or more of the following areas: gender, kinship and ethnicity. Applicants with a background in sociology should be qualified to teach courses in one or more of the following areas: sociology of development (including environmental sociology), political sociology and social psychology. Teaching and research experience in Southeast Asia in general, and in Borneo in particular, would be an advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Information Technology (*Ref*: UBD/83)

The successful applicant should be able to design and teach computer application courses in Management and Business Studies at both the undergraduate and postgraduate (MBA) levels. Active participation in the activities of the Department of Management Studies (such as research, publication and consultancy) is also expected. Applicants should have at least a Master's degree in Information Technology/Management Information Systems, university teaching experience with postgraduate teaching experience an added advantage, and a satisfactory research publication and consultancy record. A PhD in Information Technology/Management Information Systems, wide-ranging teaching and research experience especially in the Asia Pacific region, and an ability to teach in other functional areas of Management would be an added advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Development, Planning and Management of Urban Areas (*Ref*: UBD/84)

The successful applicant should be able to design and teach courses in the areas of development, planning and management of urban areas at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Ability to teach in other fields would be useful. Active participation in the activities of the Department of Public Policy and Administration (such as research, publication and consultancy) is also expected. Applicants should have at least a Master's degree, with a PhD degree an advantage, from a recognized university. Applicants should have university teaching experience, with postgraduate teaching experience an added advantage, and satisfactory research and publication record. Experience in the Asia Pacific region would be an added advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Quantitative Methods, Production and Operations Management (*Ref*: UBD/85)

The successful applicant should be able to design and teach courses in the areas of Quantitative Methods, Production and Operations Management at both the undergraduate and postgraduate (MBA) levels. Active participation in the activities of the Department of Management Studies (such as research, publication and consultancy) is also expected. In addition, the applicant should be familiar with the concepts and application of information technology in management. Applicants should have at least a Master's degree, with a PhD degree an advantage, from a recognized university with strength in Quantitative Methods, Production or Operation Management, or a related field. Applicants should also have university teaching experience, with postgraduate teaching experience an added advantage, and a satisfactory research, publication and consultancy record. Wide-ranging teaching, research, consultancy, and practical business experience especially in the Asia Pacific region, and an ability to teach other functional areas in Management would be an added advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in English Language and Applied Linguistics (*Ref*: UBD/86)

Applicants should have a PhD or MA in English Language Teaching, Professional Communication or Applied Linguistics and a minimum of five years teaching experience in at least one of these areas, including at least three years at tertiary level. A strong commitment to research is essential and a good publication record will be an advantage. The Department's present teaching programme includes undergraduate courses in Applied Linguistics, leading to the degree of BA Education (TESL); ESP/EAP courses for trainee teachers, ESP/EAP for students taking courses in electrical engineering, petroleum geoscience, management, public policy, computer science, and general English Language courses for Malay-medium students. At postgraduate level, the Department offers an MA in Applied Linguistics. In addition, the Department is planning to introduce a BA in English Language Studies in the near future. The Department welcomes applicants with proven expertise in TEFL/TESL or EAP/ESP and who are able to contribute to at least one area of Applied Linguistics or English Language Studies.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Accounting and Finance (*Ref*: UBD/87)

The successful applicant should be able to teach courses in the areas of Accounting and Finance, Auditing and Taxation, Computing and Accounting, and International Accounting at both the undergraduate and postgraduate (MBA) levels. Active participation in the activities of the Department of Management Studies (such as research, publication and consultancy) is also expected. Applicants should have at least a Master's degree in Accounting, with university teaching experience and postgraduate teaching experience an added advantage, and a satisfactory research and publication record. A PhD in Accounting, professional qualifications (such as the ACCA and CIMA), wide-ranging teaching and research experience especially in the Asia Pacific region, and an ability to teach other functional areas in Management (such as Business Law and Islamic Finance and Banking) would be an added advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in Marketing and International Business
(*Ref*: UBD/88)

The successful applicant should be able to design and teach courses in the areas of Marketing and International Business at both the undergraduate and postgraduate (MBA) levels. Active participation in the activities of the Department of Management Studies (such as research, publication and consultancy) is also expected. Applicants should have a PhD degree in Marketing, International Business or a related field, a minimum of five years university teaching with postgraduate teaching experience, and a satisfactory research, publication and consultancy record. Wide-ranging teaching, research, consultancy, and practical business experience and familiarity with international business issues and dynamics especially in the Asia-Pacific region, and an ability to teach other functional areas in Management would be an added advantage.

Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor/Professor in Islamic Studies (*Ref*: UBD/89)

Suitable applicants in the field of Shari'ah (Usul Al-Fiqh, Al-Qawa'id Al-Fiqhiyyah, Fiqh Al Iqtisad, Fiqh Muqaran, Comparative Laws, Fiqh Mu'asir) or Usuluddin ('Ilm Al-Kalam and Islamic Sects, Islamic Thought and Philosophy, Ethic and Tasawwuf, Methodology and History of Da'wah, Modern Philosophy, Logic (Mantiq), Comparative Religions) or Arabic Language (Nahw, Balaghah, Al-Naqh Al-Adabi, Arabic Literature), preferably PhD's with 5 years or more university teaching experience and a good record in research and publication. For the post of Associate Professor or Professor the candidate must have experience in administration and planning as Head of Department, Deputy Dean or Dean for more than three years. The successful applicant is expected to teach the above subjects and other subjects in Arabic (Fus-ha) and Malay or in Arabic only. Proficiency in speaking a third language (Malay or English) and ability in teaching Islamic History and Civilization, 'Aqidah Islamiyyah, Islamic Economics or Administration of Islamic Law will be an advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Physical Education
(*Ref*: UBD/90)

Applicants are required to have suitable qualifications and experience in the area of Curriculum and Teaching in Physical Education, preferably for primary schools. Candidates should possess at least a Master's degree in Physical Education. Ability to teach in Bahasa Melayu and experience in coaching sports and games would be an advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Technical Teacher Education (*Ref*: UBD/91)

Applicants are required to have suitable qualifications and experience in the area of Methods of Teaching Technical and Vocational Education. Candidates should possess at least a Master's degree in Technical Education. Ability to teach and supervise students with varied backgrounds in a range of technical and vocational subjects would be an advantage.

Associate Professor/Professor in Special Education
(*Ref*: UBD/92)

Applicants are required to have suitable qualifications and experience in the area of Special Education, with special emphasis on teaching children with learning problems in inclusive education. Candidates should possess at least a Doctoral degree in Special Education. Ability to teach and supervise postgraduate students, together with expertise and experience in developing and implementing teacher education programmes in special education would be an advantage.

Lecturer/Senior Lecturer in Plant Ecology (*Ref*: UBD/93)

Applications are invited for the post of Plant Ecologist in the Department of Biology. Applicants should have a PhD and preferably have research experience in Tropical Rainforests of South East Asia.

QUALIFICATIONS Lecturer: Minimum MA/MEd with at least 3 years relevant teaching experience in tertiary teaching and research. **Senior Lecturer:** Normally a PhD (or in certain cases MA/MSc/MEd) with at least 5 years relevant experience and a proven record of teaching and research. Tertiary administrative experience will be useful. **Associate Professor:** Candidates should already be holding the post of Senior Lecturer with at least 5 years relevant experience and a proven record in teaching, research and administration. **Professor:** Candidates should have extensive relevant teaching experience, an outstanding academic record of research and publication and an established international reputation.

TERMS AND CONDITION OF SERVICE: The appointment will be on a permanent basis for citizens of Brunei Darussalam. For non-citizens appointment will be by contract for a period of three years which is renewable subject to mutual agreement. The annual salary range is as follows: **Lecturer** B$33,720 - B$50,880, **Senior Lecturer** B$55,200 - B$62,400; **Associate Professor** B$64,800, **Professor** B$70,800 (Exchange rate for Brunei Dollars to 1 unit of foreign currency as on 24 October 1998. UK = B$2.7765, US$ = B$1.6320; A$ = B$1.0384, C$ = B$1.0710; NZ$ = B$0.8812)

OTHER BENEFITS: Bonus (one month's salary for Lecturer/Senior Lecturer, half month's salary for Associate Professor/Professor) after each 12 months of satisfactory service. Gratuity (25% of last drawn salary x 36 months at the end of contract). Education allowance and children's passages. Subsidized housing (staff contribute B$130 per month). Free medical and dental services. Interest free car loan. Annual leave of 48 days. Passage and removal allowance. At present there is no personal income tax in Brunei.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE: For further details and application forms, please contact the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Advertising), 36 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PF (tel 0171 387 8572 ext. 206; fax 0171 383 0368; email. appts@acu.ac.uk). Completed forms together with copies of academic certificates and a comprehensive curriculum vitae with the names and addresses of three referees should be sent to: **Registrar and Secretary, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Jalan Tungku Link, Gadong BE1410, Negara Brunei Darussalam.**

Application must reach Universiti Brunei Darussalam by **7 December 1998.** Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and informed of details regarding interviews.

A *member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities*

ACU



GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

DIRECTOR

Salary c.£70k

The Glasgow School of Art wishes to appoint a Director to succeed Professor Dugald Cameron, who retires in October 1999. Reporting to the Board of Governors, the Director is responsible for the conduct and operations of the School including teaching, research and administration.

Established in 1845, Glasgow School of Art is an Independent Art School which is comprised of a School of Fine Art, School of Design and Craft and the Mackintosh School of Architecture, offering a full range of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees awarded by the University of Glasgow. The School enjoys an international reputation for excellence.

At the House for an Art Lover, the School has established the Digital Design Studio where postgraduate and research programmes are undertaken in advanced 2D/3D motion graphics and virtual prototyping. This initiative has the strong support of international business.

REMIT

The new Director will provide leadership and vision at a time of important constitutional change in Scotland. You will be responsible for developing and promoting the School's initiatives within the United Kingdom and abroad, and must be capable of inspiring the confidence of staff, students and external agencies. The Director is also the School's "designated officer" and is responsible for the School's financial probity.

QUALIFICATIONS

The post calls for a person with substantial management experience in industry or academia. You should be educated to degree standard and be capable of providing effective leadership arising out of an understanding of the present and likely future context in which higher education takes place. This appointment is for three years initially and will be reviewed at the end of that period.

Application form and job description may be obtained from: Janet Docherty, Personnel Officer, Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew Street, Glasgow G3 6RQ, telephone 0141-353 4505. Closing date for submission of application forms: 14 December 1998.

Completed application forms should be marked "private & confidential" and returned to - Mr Simon Paterson, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew Street, Glasgow G3 6RQ.

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The programme has a modular structure and runs on a full-time basis over a period of one calendar year. Its taught core, run by a team with extensive experience of public and international experience, is of six months duration and covers the following:

- governance and the public sector
- strategic management
- resourcing the public sector
- researching public services

Participants are also required to complete a placement which runs concurrently with the taught element of the course. This is tailored to individual requirements and may be arranged with a number of agencies including European and international organizations.

The second six months involves a project relevant to the students profession. This may be completed in the UK or in the student's home country. Students normally employed in London may have the opportunity of increased flexibility in the timescale.

For further information please contact Dr Usman Khan, Course Director on 0171 607 2789 email u.khan@unl.ac.uk, or to apply please contact Postgraduate Admissions, University of North London, 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 8DB, Tel 0171 753 3333, Email admissions@unl.ac.uk.

http://www.unl.ac.uk

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UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN
TRINITY COLLEGE

LECTURER IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Applications are invited for the above post in the Department of Political Science at Trinity College, Dublin. The appointment, which is permanent, will be tenable from September, 1999. The successful candidate will become a member of a small department with an active research record. Duties will include a responsibility for teaching and supervising theses in International Relations at Ph.D. level. The Department is particularly interested in candidates specialising in the study of the European Union.

Salary Scales:
Lecturer Grade II: IR£16,348 - IR£25,933 per annum
Lecturer Grade I: IR£32,997 - IR£40,384 per annum

Appointment will be made on the Lecturer Grade II scale within the salary range IR£16,348 - IR£23,068 per annum, at a point to accord with qualifications and experience to date.

Application forms and further particulars relating to this post may be obtained from:

Establishment Officer
Staff Office
Trinity College
Dublin 2
Tel: +353-1-608-1678/Fax: +353-1-677-2169
e.mail: recruit@tcd.ie
Website: http://www.tcd.ie/Staff_Office

Further information on all aspects of the Department may be found at its Web server at **http://www.politics.tcd.ie**

The closing date for receipt of completed applications will be **Friday, 11th December, 1998.**

Trinity College is an equal opportunities employer

Ref: 754/98

Responding to Conflict is offering the following courses and workshops.

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April - June 2000

A highly practical, experience-based course for people working in areas of instability and conflict. Especially suitable for NGO staff, aid workers, those concerned with rights, relief, reconstruction and development. Includes conflict analysis, group dynamics, negotiation, mediation, trauma, confidence-building, conflict prevention and much else.

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This is a ten week course. Modules can be taken individually if required.

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Primarily for staff of agencies concerned with relief, development, rights and peace-building programmes.

The workshops will provide practical models and methods to assist aid agency staff to analyse conflicts, and to integrate effective conflict-handling strategies into their programmes.

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14-15 July	Conflict Prevention and Peace-building
16 July	Training for Conflict Resolution and Peace-building

Responding to Conflict also offers, on request, local workshops and consultancies in English, French or Spanish. For more information, please contact:

RTC, Selly Oak Colleges (G), 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham B29 6LJ, UK.
Tel: (+44)(0)121 415 5641. Fax: (+44)(0)121 415 4119.
E-mail: enquiries@respond.org. Website: www.respond.org/

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For application forms and further details of these and our other programmes please contact:

Rebecca Kelly
Programme Administrator
IDPM
Crawford House
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 9GH, UK

Tel: +44-161 275 2800
Fax: +44-161 273 8829

Email: Rebecca.Kelly@man.ac.uk http://www.man.ac.uk/idpm/

RTC SKILLS & STRATEGIES FOR PEACE — RESPONDING TO CONFLICT

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- **Deputy Director, £25,000-£27,000** (two year contract renewable)
- **Trainer and Learning Coordinator, £22,000-£24,000** (one year contract, renewable)

You will have substantial experience, with commitment, flexibility and energy.
We welcome applications regardless of race, gender, disability, age and sexuality.
Closing date for applications: 31 December 1998
Interviews: mid-January 1999

For detailed job descriptions and application forms, please contact:
Responding to Conflict,
1046 Bristol Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6LJ, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 121 415 5641
Fax: +44 (0) 121 415 4119
E-mail: enquiries@respond.org
Registered UK charity no1015906

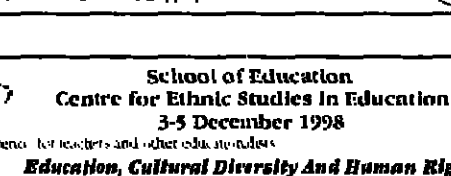
Planning and Appraisal of Biodiversity Conservation Projects

11 January - 1 April 1999
College of African Wildlife Management, Mweka, Tanzania
(In collaboration with the Development and Project Planning Centre, University of Bradford, England)

A course for anyone with a responsibility or an interest in the planning and appraisal of more appropriate, effective and sustainable biodiversity conservation projects.

The twelve week course is divided into 1-3 week modules, which can be combined to meet individual training needs. Topics covered include biodiversity conservation, project planning, participatory planning, environmental assessment, financial and economic appraisal and a field visit to a protected area in Tanzania.

For further information contact:
The Course Director, Biodiversity Planning Course
College of African Wildlife Management
Mweka, PO Box 3031, Moshi, Tanzania
Fax: 00 255 55 51113 Email: uigtan@eoltz.com
http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/dppc/pdt.html



School of Education
Centre for Ethnic Studies in Education
3-5 December 1998

A conference for teachers and other educationalists

Education, Cultural Diversity And Human Rights

Contributors include ***Margot Brown*** Co-ordinator of the Human Rights in the Curriculum Project, ***Glynn Ford***, MEP, ***Audrey Osler*** Consultant to the Council of Europe on human rights education, ***Bhikhu Parekh*** Professor of Political Theory at the University of Hull, ***Robin Richardson*** Director of the schools evaluation organisation INSTED, ***Gajendra Verma*** Sarah Fielden Professor of Education, University of Manchester

Further information from Mrs Chris Connor, School of Education, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK
Phone 0161 275 3508 Email Chris.Connor@man.ac.uk

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- International Human Resources Management (April 13-24)
- Global Marketing (April 27 - May 8)
- Multinational Financial Management (May 11-22)
- Managing Change & Emerging Technologies (May 26 - June 5)

COMPUTER GRAPHICS
- Computer Graphic Design (June 22 - August 28)

LAW
- Legal Aspects of International Business (June 22 - July 2)

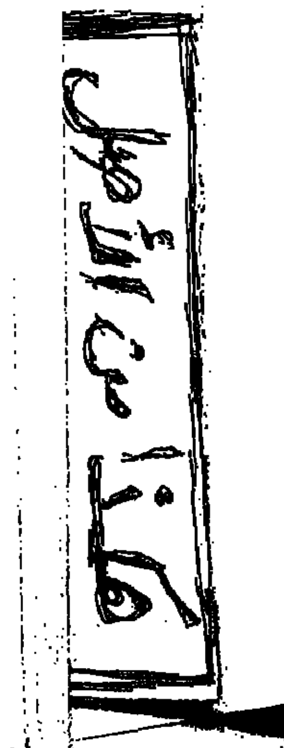
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Vietnam

DFID is re-orientating the UK development assistance programme in Vietnam to focus on poverty elimination. A new country strategy paper has been developed to provide a framework for future co-operation, with particular emphasis on promoting growth which will help the poor of Vietnam. To help with the evolution and development of this new agenda, DFID SE Asia is creating a Programme Support Office which will take an interdisciplinary approach to increasing opportunities for the rural poor by way of improved education and health and access to water and sanitation. Consequently, we are now seeking experienced rural infrastructure and development professionals to play a key role in this new team. The appointments will be for a period of 3 years and a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience will be paid.

Closing date for receipt of completed applications is 7 December 1998.

For further details and application form, please write to Appointments Officer, Ref No AH304/3A/GW, Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 8EA, stating Ref No AH304/3A, clearly on your envelope, or telephone 01355 843545.

DFID is committed to a policy of equal opportunities and applications for these positions are sought from both women and men.

DFID Department for International Development

Rural Infrastructure Field Manager

Your principal responsibility will be to help implement DFID's new country strategy by identifying new infrastructure programmes, assisting in the management of current programmes and projects and contributing to the evolution of country strategy. This will involve building successful relations with the Vietnamese government to ensure DFID policies are understood, as well as assisting with building effective relations with other partners (civil society and donors) to promote effective co-ordination and share information and ideas.

Qualifications

You must be a chartered member of an appropriate professional institution, with at least four years' relevant work experience, which should include two years spent in a developing country. Key competencies will include the ability to manage projects, consultants and contractors, backed by first class team leadership, communication and negotiating skills. You should be professionally experienced in rural road and water engineering. Knowledge of DFID or other aid agency work will be an advantage.

Rural Development Specialist/Field Manager

Your role will be to co-ordinate in-country responsibilities for the identification and development of programmes designed to improve income opportunities and human resource development in a sustainable manner. You'll work closely with the rural infrastructure specialist to bring a rural development perspective to rural infrastructure and water and sanitation programmes. It is important that these DFID supported interventions draw on the experiences of other agencies and thereby influence national policy formulation related to rural development, and also contribute to improving the understanding of the causes, characteristics and consequences of rural poverty in Vietnam.

Qualifications

You must have experience of working in a developing country, together with proven experience of development programmes in rural areas and in addressing national policies on rural development. Practical experience of poverty reduction programmes and working with Government and NGO's are also essential. Experience of South East Asia and working with CSO/CBO's will be advantageous. Knowledge of DFID project cycle management and programme preparation procedures are required, but training can be provided if necessary.

Applicants should either be nationals of Member States of the European Economic Area (EEA), or Commonwealth citizens who have an established right of abode and the right to work in the United Kingdom.

Opportunity in Nepal

Social Development Adviser (Kathmandu)

Nepal District Health Strengthening Project

The British Council manages the above project, which is an initiative of the Department of Health Services of His Majesty's Government, Nepal, on behalf of the UK's Department for International Development. Following an Inception Period Review, the Council is now looking to recruit a Social Development Adviser to join its team. This is a new position which combines national responsibilities with specific oversight of project activities and local staff in three project districts.

You will be responsible for delivering project objectives in respect of Community Participation and Inequalities, with a particular responsibility for developing the skills of local Community Development and Governance specialists appointed to project districts.

Duties include: responsibility for developing project staff technical skills; analysis of stakeholder institutions at district and regional level; oversight for achieving objectives on equalities and community participation and for innovative local projects; development of appropriate approaches to participatory monitoring, and dissemination of lessons learned and communication to service users. You will also act as Deputy Project Director, undertaking management responsibilities in support of the Project Director and substituting for the Project Director when absent

Qualifications and experience: Essential EU National with UK educational background, to include a higher degree in social development or a first degree with practical and analytical skills acquired in an appropriate setting, preferably in a health related context, experience of working with local people in community development activities (preferably in South Asia) and of adapting to and understanding local cultural patterns of working and a willingness to undertake language training, if needed. Prior knowledge of Nepali and experience of project management would be desirable.

Contract: initially for two years commencing February 1999.

Salary: in the range £36,026 - £40,862 (including superannuation compensation addition), depending on qualifications and experience.

Benefits include: rent-free accommodation; air fares, baggage allowance; private medical insurance cover.

Closing date for applications: 18 December 1998. Interviews are currently scheduled to take place on Thursday, 14 January 1999 in Manchester.

Requests for details and an application form, quoting reference 98/S/021, and enclosing an A4 sae (39p UK only) to Mark Hepworth, Overseas Appointment Services, The British Council, Bridgewater House, 58 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6BB, UK.
Telephone 0161 957 7383, fax 0161 957 7397.

The British council and DFID are committed to a policy of equal opportunities.



PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
Ghana (Accra) — £22,831

Save the Children Fund (UK) has been operational in Ghana since 1990 working with government and local partners in health and social welfare to achieve lasting benefits for children. We are now seeking to appoint a creative and dynamic programme director to take our work forward into the millennium.

As a programme director, your main tasks will be to develop and oversee the implementation of SCF's country strategy paper, build on strengths of an experienced national team and develop productive partnerships with local partners. To meet the challenge of this post, you will need substantial experience in managing overseas development programmes at a senior level, demonstrating skills in financial, resource and staff management and development. Strategic planning, excellent negotiation and representational skills and an understanding of the West African context are also important prerequisites.

The above post is offered on a 25-month contract and has accompanied status. Salary should be tax-free. You can also expect a good benefits package, including generous leave, accommodation and flights.

For further details and an application form write to: Jenny Thomas, Overseas Personnel Administrator, Africa, SCF, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD or fax 0171 793 7610.

Closing date 4 December 1998. **Previous applicants should not re-apply.**

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The International Rescue Committee, a private, non-profit agency assisting refugees worldwide is currently seeking candidates for the following positions:

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- Program Managers

Substantial int'l work experience in crisis environments required.
Able to travel w/short notice.
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For more information, visit IRC's website at: www.intrescom.org
International Rescue Committee, 122 East 42nd Street, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10168-1289



PROGRAMME MANAGER
Tibet Autonomous Region, China — £20,778

Save the Children Fund (UK) has been working in Tibet Autonomous Region since 1990. There are currently two programmes in the region: education, and environmental health. Both programmes work in close partnership with local authorities to support the improvement of basic education and water sanitation facilities in rural areas.

The education programme supports rural government primary schools, focusing on pre/primary school teacher training (including hygiene education), the introduction of child centred learning methods, small scale income generation to support the schools and adult literacy. The education work will be expanded from January 1999, with the implementation of the education component of an integrated rural development project, sponsored by the Chinese Government and the European Union, in Shigatse prefecture. The environmental health programme supports the implementation of hygiene education work, improved rural water supply, and operational and maintenance training at rural village level. All teaching and training is in the Tibetan language. There are also occasional emergency and rehabilitation projects in the region.

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Closing date: 14 December 1998. For further details please write to Deki Topden, SCF Personnel Administrator at Overseas Personnel Department, 17 Grove Lane, London SE5 8RD or e-mail d.topden@scfuk.org.uk or fax on 0171-793-7614.

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Flexible firms were supposed to be good for bosses and staff. Instead they erode loyalty, spread fear and ruin lives. **Desmond Christy** reports on a new study

Downsizing to disaster

"THERE may be trouble ahead," sang Fred Astaire, who can have had no idea that this song would one day be used as a TV commercial to sell pensions to executives who are about to lose their jobs. With a pension, we are assured, we can "face the music and dance". The advertisement closes by promising that these particular pensions are "flexible", and will "adapt" to our changing needs.

Let's hope these pensions are as flexible as promised, because "flexibility" is the mantra of the new "dynamic capitalism". And its message is clear: if you can't cope with change, you don't have a future. Few workers in the 1990s will have escaped the propaganda for this message.

Richard Sennett, speaking through a cloud of tobacco smoke in his office at the London School of Economics, is not as optimistic as the pension provider. His message is that modern capitalism has entirely unexpected consequences for the "flexible" worker of the 1990s. The title of his new book-length essay gets straight to the point: The Corrosion Of Character: The Personal Consequences Of Work In The New Capitalism.

What does Sennett, one of the world's most distinguished social scientists, mean by character? He does not mean personality. "What I mean is the capacity of someone to sustain for a long period of time a set of purposes and aims that they realise through their own actions. What is corroded by modern capitalism are things like the experience of trust, which is a fundamental commitment — whether you feel you can be trusted, whether you can trust the people you work with, and so on. If you have very short-term, superficial relations with people, you are never going to develop trust."

'An American college graduate can expect to change job at least 11 times, and to change his or her skill base at least three times'

"Today", Sennett tells us in his book, "a young American with at least two years of college can expect to change job at least 11 times in the course of working, and change his or her skill base at least three times during those 40 years of labour."

He begins his essay with an interview with Rico, a man who knows all about downsizing, company "re-engineering", teamwork, and short contracts. Rico and his wife are the "very acme of an adaptable, mutually supportive couple", but both "often fear that they are on the edge of losing control over their lives" in a world where there is only short-term work and short-term profits.

Rico's experiences of changing jobs and becoming a consultant where he has no fixed role and never really belongs to a company have "set his inner and emotional life adrift". He is haunted by a sense that he cannot provide his children with the ethical discipline that his parents instilled in him. Rico's working life, with its constant changes, doesn't provide his children with examples of values such as loyalty, trust, and service. "You can't imagine how stupid I feel", Rico told Sennett, "when I talk to my kids about commitment. It's an abstract virtue to them; they don't see it anywhere."

For Sennett, Rico is an Everyman whose dilemmas show how "short-term capitalism threatens to corrode his character, particularly those qualities of character which bind human beings to one another and furnishes each with a sense of sustainable self . . . The flexible behaviour which has brought him success is weakening his own character in ways for which there exists no practical remedy."

Sennett's book is already a best-seller in Germany, but it has yet to appear in the United States. How will his fellow Americans respond to being told that their character is being eroded? "They will either find it shocking, or read it like it's something from Mars. Until about six months ago our unemployment was very low. Now unemployment is rising and it hasn't proved possible to shield the American system from the crisis in the Far East."

But, far from their character being corroded, don't downsized workers tell themselves, "Look, I'm the brave one. I'm the one who's changed all these jobs and I'm still out there fighting?"

"I don't actually think that is how people feel," says Sennett. "What happens is that there is never a discussion about failure. That's what is so strange. It is a kind of secret that Americans harbour to themselves. When people lose their job they treat it as a kind of personal shame. When people tell me 'I'm a consultant' a little light goes on. Ah, they've been sacked. But that is the problem; it is so ferociously a culture dedicated to success that there's a public silence about failure."

Few realise that the capitalism of flexible working means that most workers are losers. About 15-18 per cent of workers will find that their first five years in a company rewards them with rapid upward mobility. A similar percentage will experience rapid downward mobility; while the rest will find that their wages gradually fall.

Companies move to flexible methods of working because they are trying to increase their short-term profits. American management increasingly rewards executives with stock options, so their pay packet is dependent on the stock market prices. "You have to produce results within an ever shorter period of time. So that's what drives the system," says Sennett. The long-term damage to the company will probably be apparent to everyone by year four, but by then the executives who "re-engineered" the company will have moved on. The long-term cost will be paid by those who were loyal.

The propaganda for downsizing and re-engineering has been so successful that most people assume it makes good economic sense. It does not. In the early 1990s, reports Sennett, the American Management Association and the Wyatt Companies conducted studies of firms which had seriously downsized. They found that companies that repeated downsizings produced "lower profits and declining worker productivity". The same study found that less than half the companies achieved the savings they had planned, fewer than one-third increased profitability, and less than a quarter increased their productivity. To many people this is intuitively obvious: who works well if they are constantly worried about being shown the door?

Sennett's willingness to confront failure in people's lives and his feeling that Europeans are more sympathetic to his concerns than fellow Americans, puts him in the company of Arthur Miller, author of Death Of A Salesman. Sennett and Miller have talked about The Corrosion Of Character. "His take", says Sennett, "is that the great tragedy of the United States is that we never had a proper socialist movement. I keep telling him that it is in the culture that we never had one. To him it's a political event — his generation blew it."

Sennett finds it extraordinary how many people have swallowed the propaganda about flexibility and turbo-capitalism. "That's one thing that my book is bad about. I didn't make it clear that, in my experience, these are issues that don't become obvious to people until they have been in the labour market for 10 to 15 years. Young people grew up under Thatcher and Reagan, when they were made the promise that everybody would be a winner. Those young people won't find that five years from now."

It is perfectly possible, Sennett believes, for us to shift from an economy obsessed with the short term to one that believes in the long term. "This is not beyond the mind of man, once you make the decision that what you are running in a business is something in which you are ruining other people's lives."

As it is, many people applaud when workers are laid off, taking it as a sign that a company is becoming, in the rhetoric of big business, "leaner and meaner". But such companies are transferring the costs of supporting the laid off workers to the rest of society. "I think that was what Thatcherism was about — the defeated and dispossessed would somehow dematerialise. That's what worries me about New Labour — they all look too competent and successful, as if they don't really know about failure.

"I think that people further to the left than New Labour have the feeling that they are not with it, that they are somehow behind the times. But this is just not a viable system. The facts are with the left — the moment you think about the long term this system doesn't look good."

The Corrosion Of Character refrains from offering a political programme that follows from its critique of modern capitalism. But Sennett is certain "that a regime which provides human beings no deep reasons to care about one another cannot long preserve its legitimacy". There may be trouble ahead.

If you would like to order The Corrosion Of Character: The Personal Consequences Of Work In The New Capitalism, for £13 contact The Guardian CultureShop (see page 32)

Desires of peaceful primates

Robin McKie on US research that shows humans as essentially genial beings bound by a strong urge to gossip

FOR FREUD, it was sex; for Jung, a desire to communicate with the universal unconscious; and for the footballer Paul Gascoigne, six pints of lager, a biryani and a laugh with his mates.

Human desire is a funny business, in other words. And we all have different views: from procreation to our national team winning the World Cup.

We are what we want, and a group of US psychologists recently announced that they had identified the 15 fundamental desires that underpin all human actions.

Based on a survey of 2,500 respondents, the team produced a list of basic desires: sex, food, physical activity, the avoidance of pain, curiosity, honour (the desire to live within a code of conduct), a need for order, vengeance, social contact, family, social prestige and power.

"These desires — which we possess in varying amounts — are similar to those found in animals and are probably genetic in origin," believes Professor Steven Reiss, of Ohio State University.

The remaining three urges, according to the team, are yearnings for citizenship, independence and fear of social rejection. These are acquired, not inherited.

It is an intriguing study, though it has its critics. "You get people to answer statements, and then try to uncover the common characteristics that underpin them. It is a powerful technique, but it is also very subjective," said Dr Til Wykes, of the Institute of Psychiatry, London. "What you get out depends on the presumptions you put in."

Dr Steve Mithen, of Reading university, said: "I certainly don't accept the idea that we share a sense of curiosity with other creatures." Animals, he argues, are inquisitive about unexpected objects in their environment, but do not have a generalised intellectual interest. "If the sun rose in the west, and set in the east, a chimpanzee — our cleverest evolutionary cousin — would not notice, or give a damn."

A more telling point is made by Frans de Waal, of Yerkes Regional Primate Research Centre in Atlanta. He stresses the criticality of reconciliation as a human attribute. Reiss ignores this.

"If you created a city like Manhattan and filled it with chimpanzees, you would end up with a murder rate that would make New York's current homocide levels look trivial," he says. "We are a species marked by a desire to make peace."

It is a point backed by palaeontologist and essayist Stephen Jay Gould. "*Homo sapiens* is a remarkably genial species," he states. "Think how many millions of hours we can log for most people [who] go without noting anything more threatening than a raised third finger once a week or so."

Our peaceful nature is matched by humanity's burning desire to talk and to communicate, another desire not mentioned by the Ohio team. Professor Robin Dunbar of Liverpool university points out that we are easily the most communicative species on Earth, and most of our talk is simply trivial.

We dwell on personal relationships and experiences, and spend little time talking about science, art or religion — though we think we do. And the reason we concentrate on trivia is simple: language is the cement of peacemaking.

While other primates seek to calm others and ensure group stability through grooming, we do it through gossip — and that is far more effective. You can talk to more than one person at a time.

We live to gossip, in other words.

£2m set puts Penny Black in the shade

THE world's most valuable set of stamps, discovered by chance in an old writing set, is to go on sale in London — priced at £2.75 million, *writes Amelia Gentleman*.

Former RAF serviceman Alexander Martin found the 48 twopence stamps in mint condition, rolled in a leather writing set at Dalkeith Palace near Edinburgh when he was compiling an inventory of the palace contents for the Duke of Buccleuch in 1945.

Described as "probably the most important philatelic item in the world", the stamps, printed in 1840, were among the first issued. They are thought to have been bought by Walter Francis, 5th Duke of Buccleuch for use on the household mail and were then forgotten for a century.

The sheet is still coated with a layer of gum and retains its margins, printed with the words: "Place labels above the address and towards the right hand side of the letter." The first 2d blues were issued on May 6, 1840, the same day as the Penny Black. The blues are rarer because they were produced for only one year. A single twopenny blue in mint condition is worth about £5,000, but the Buccleuch are much more valuable because there are so many and they retain the original margin and gum.

The stamps have been owned by three different collectors since being discovered, but are now to be sold on the open market by London specialists Spink.

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE REIGATE



Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

FOLLOWING the break-up of the USSR, which country now has the largest empire?

ANDREW Rice's answer is unsatisfactory (October 4). Empire is defined as the domination of one state over others. The largest today is obviously that of the United States. Consider its power and influence over the North and South American continents as well as the Caribbean, excluding Cuba. In the Pacific area one can add the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia and Australia. Japan has a US garrison. In the Middle East: Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt. As for Europe, US control is sometimes shaky, but certainly the UK and Italy can rarely act independently. — *V S Petheram, Buckfastleigh, Devon*

IF I WERE given a loaded revolver and diplomatic immunity, would it be all right to go and shoot General Pinochet?

THAT depends on whether Pinochet is correct in his belief that capital punishment and lynch law are morally justifiable. — *Michael Ghirelli, Hillesden, Buckinghamshire*

HAS A fire station ever burned down?

IN JANUARY 1994, there were about 800 simultaneous bush fires on the east coast of New South Wales. The raging inferno at the southern edge of Sydney destroyed all of Royal National Park's 15,000 hectares in one or two days. We stood by helplessly as the fire consumed everything in its path (except people, thankfully).

It also destroyed the park's large workshop — vehicles, tools, storage sheds, a dozen gas cylinders that exploded dangerously and spectacularly at random intervals. Inexplicably, and somewhat fortunately, the only part of the workshop which escaped the fire was the fire equipment shed. — *Brian Leahy, Hurstville, NSW, Australia*

THE fire station in Apia, Samoa, burned down completely a few years ago. The station had been a very old wooden building on the sea front. After the fire, the engine had to sit out on the concrete base of the old building for months until a new concrete building was built with Australian aid. — *Bob Macfarlane, Auckland, New Zealand*

OUR village station was badly damaged by fire a few years ago. I believe there were firemen there when it started, and one of them asked a neighbour to use her phone to call the fire brigade. — *David Holmes, Yatton, Bristol*

UPON arriving in Uganda for the first time in 1993, I was most impressed and struck by the sight of the fire station on the edge of Kampala. Several days later when passing the same site, it was in cinders. — *Danny Coyne, Montpellier, France*

WHAT is the term for getting the lyrics to songs wrong?

AS A young secretary armed with a first-class shorthand/typing diploma from London, my first job in Australia was working for a Yorkshire man who dictated technical reports with his teeth firmly clenched round the stem of his pipe. He nearly swallowed it whole when he read my typed offering of "wild steam-coated water clouds" (mild steel-coated autoclaves) — and I soon got promoted to higher duties. — *Winnie Dwyer, Fremantle, Western Australia*

AS A CHILD I was convinced each Christmas that "the little Maltesers laid down his sweet head". — *Terry Siederer, Stockholm, Sweden*

WHY are rings (paedophile, drug) nasty, but circles (family, friends) nice?

A VICIOUS circle is an obvious exception but I'm not clear into which camp a fairy ring would fall. — *Colin Armstrong, Preston, Lancashire*

Any answers?

IF LIGHT from stars takes so long to reach us, and we see the stars as they were millions of years ago, how can we tell that they weren't extinguished long ago? — *Robin Corbett, London*

IF A government were elected which put the interests of people ahead of the interests of business, how would it be prevented from governing? — *Steve Peake, Brighton*

BEFORE global warming rose to the top of the environmental agenda, acid rain was often in the news. Has it got better or worse, or is it now the least of our worries? — *S J Naylor, Poole, Dorset*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/+44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ. The Notes & Queries website is at http://nq.guardian.co.uk/

Letter from West Cameroon Robert Lacville

White warning

WE ENDED our meeting with a ritual glass of raffia palm wine, not forgetting to splash a bit on the red earth out of respect for the ancestors. "It's to ask permission," the Elder explained.

The sap was tapped last night, so the wine had not had time to turn sour. Some of the villagers took advantage of the party to drink three glasses. Across the valley from where I was standing above the crop of taro roots and cassava, a lush hillside of coffee bushes and banana trees swept down to the fish ponds. The peasants' co-operative here has installed an integrated farming system to conserve soil and energy. The maize feeds men and pigs; the pigs' urine stimulates plankton to feed the tilapia in the lucrative fish farm, where the baby tilapia feed the catfish. Mud from the ponds enriches rows of green beans and cassava, which have been carved around the hillside between rows of trees. The trees stabilise the soil and reduce erosion, and "they provide poles for the climbing beans", Kameni points out enthusiastically. He is the leader of this ecological success story, and tells me proudly that "it is so successful that many people come to see us. The UNDP helps us. The BBC sent a crew to make a film for television."

Kameni has a messianic edge, making him attractive and vulnerable. As I was leaving I held his hand: "What you have achieved here is wonderful. But it is still young and small and weak. When you have repeated this integrated system with other peasant farmers, you will have more than one valley to show us. Then you will be strong. Until then, you should try to refuse the offers from your visitors, when they invite you to conferences and seminars. A BBC film is good: but one is enough. Your big brother offers you this one piece of advice: don't let the white people suck you dry."

Bopta, my Cameroonian research colleague chuckled: "Good advice! Small brother would do well to listen carefully." Kameni was bemused: "It is true that I am receiving many invitations. Many people have asked me to visit them."

"You have help from the UNDP and advice from the NGO SAILD: that is enough. The rest you and your partners will achieve through hard work, with the help of the Almighty. But you will receive invitations from all over the world: first from Yaoundé, and then perhaps Lomé. Then the Canadians and Americans will invite you to their seminars, and then the Europeans will arrive with air tickets. Somebody will write a Master's thesis about your work: but it is not you who will receive the qualification. Everybody will applaud you. And when you come home, the fish will be dead and the ponds will be dry. Then the white diplomats and foreign NGOs will forget you. You will be left with nothing but memories, and a bitter heart."

Now Kameni was listening hard. Bopta said: "Think of a beautiful young woman. Every man wants to go with her, but she must say 'No'! If she says 'Yes' only once, then she will go twice and three times, and then no serious man will ever speak to her again. Her reputation will be gone. She will be an empty shell. That is how the foreign NGOs behave to peasant associations and pioneering farmers. When you are at their seminars, remember that you are only their puppet, and the foreigners are pulling your strings."

LIKE BOPTA, I'm not impressed with foreign NGOs in Africa, with their small projects and high overhead costs. I once told a United States conference: "Northern NGOs and development diplomats are very promiscuous. They get aroused every time they see a well-organised group of African farmers. Success is sexy. You all want to jump into bed with a success story, but you refuse the idea of marriage. Marriage implies a long-term partnership, where the partners share their ups and downs. But you don't want marriage; you only want to jump into bed with Africans, then move on to other pastures when it suits you."

The stunned silence in that American conference room was broken by a few chuckles from people who have seen the situation repeated too often. A good farmers' leader becomes "flavour of the month". While he travels to other people's conferences, the crops die and his fellow farmers become alienated through suspicion or jealousy.

If Kameni can resist the lure of the foreigners, he will avoid this, and his association will prosper. They may then become strong enough to demand better roads and to limit the arbitrary power of corrupt officials. Then they will be able to organise their own conferences. I hope Kameni will be able to resist the enticements of white men; if not, they will suck him dry.

A Country Diary

Vernon Mullen

OTTAWA, *Canada:* Surrounded by trains and traffic near our home, a narrow, scrubby swamp provides a haven of peace for birds and my early morning walks. Over the last nine years I have identified 109 species in the area; almost half are summer residents and the rest migrants and occasionals. During late summer I have been watching still-spotted young American robins (*Turdus migratorius*), along with cedar waxwings and cardinals gobbling the ripening wild grapes.

When I came to Ottawa 20 years ago, cardinals were rare; now they are common. One male attacks its reflection in a neighbour's window all winter.

My first autumn migrants were white-throated sparrows and rose-breasted grosbeaks, who fed on juicy, glossy-buckthorn berries, hanging heavily from every branch. For two minutes I watched a tiny warbler preening itself in a beam of sunlight, the first time I had seen a male of this species sitting still for more than three seconds. With its dashing white mask and a flashy, yellow scarf across its neck, it deserves to be called the Highwayman — a more romantic name than Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*).

Snap judgments

PHOTOGRAPHY
Chris Arnot

VANLEY BURKE looks happy, as well he might. We are in Birmingham's elegant Museum and Art Gallery, surrounded by works by some of the giants of photography. To our left is Robert Howlett's portrait of a slouching Isambard Kingdom Brunel — a slightly different pose from the famous version in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

To our right is one of Bill Brandt's studies of slum life in 1930s' and 1940s' Birmingham. At one end of the room is Roger Fenton's 1857 picture of the west front of Peterborough Cathedral, its remarkable tonal values undimmed by age. At the other are Mrs Patrick Campbell, Mrs William Morris and a haunting shot of Tennyson's niece, Agnes Weld, by Julia Margaret Cameron, one of the greatest portrait photographers of the 19th century.

Yet the biggest frame in the room by far contains Vanley Burke's picture of African Liberation Day in Handsworth Park. It was taken in 1979, not a good year for race relations. The National Front was in full rant and, beneath Afro haircuts and hats (woolly and pork pie), you can see the tension on the beautifully lit faces in the crowd. Every face is black. Every eye is either focused on the stage or glancing furtively to the side, as though expecting some kind of attack.

"I was on the stage with speakers from the ANC and Swapo," Burke recalls. "I didn't want the responsibility of taking them in case the pictures fell into the wrong hands. So I concentrated on the crowd." Burke is 47 and has been taking photographs since he arrived in Birmingham from Jamaica in 1965, clutching a Box Brownie. Despite being awarded the Kodak Bursary in 1979, he has had more recognition in New York and Johannesburg than in London.

At least Birmingham has recognised his talent. Much of Burke's work features in the city's vast archive. Not that the collection has had much of a show until now. More than 2 million prints and negatives have hitherto been hidden away in the Central Library. To put that in context, the V&A has a mere 300,000.

At last some space has been cleared in the Museum and Art Gallery for an exhibition called, appropriately enough, Coming To Light (until January 3). Some of the gallery's French impressionists have temporarily given way to an eclectic exhibition spanning 150 years of camera-work.

"It was always my intention to bring to the public's attention the scale, diversity and significance of the collection in Birmingham," says the library's head of photography, Peter James. Easier said than done when the space finally becomes available and you have 2 million photos to choose from, but room for only 100.

"I wanted to bring out the historical range, from the 1840s to stuff we've commissioned lately, and to show a variety of photographic processes in terms of colour, tone and finish. The history of photography in Birmingham has been largely overlooked in the standard works."

The city's first exhibition was staged at the long-deceased Hen and Chickens hotel 141 years ago, and James has followed a roughly similar structure. So there are four sections: Architectural, Landscapes, Portraits and Commercial. But within each of these divisions are some clever juxtapositions.



Stephen . . . one of many Handsworth self-portraits taken in 1979

Fortitude, Mark Oliver Dell's 1953 photo of ribbed stonework inside Salisbury Cathedral, sits side by side with Keith Burnett's 1993 picture of a ribbed metal construction languishing under the concrete fretwork of Spaghetti Junction.

Nearby, a tiny figure stands dwarfed on the balcony of the sensationally ornate Palace of Cardinal Mendoza. Charles Clifford's 1856 photograph is deliberately positioned next to Dell and H L Wainwright's starkly modernist block of flats in Streatham, London, 1936. Another century, another set of balconies.

These intriguing contrasts are woven though the exhibition. Just above William Smedley Aston's formal 1906 portrait of the actress Mrs Patrick Campbell is the mobile face of an Afro-Caribbean youth called Stephen, grinning hugely and pointing at the camera.

His was one of many Handsworth Self-Portraits in 1979. Derek Bishton, Brian Homer and John Reardon (later the picture editor of the Observer) wanted to explore new ways of encouraging a community to represent itself through photography. They set up a stall and invited passers-by to take their own pictures using a long cable release. More than 500 took part.

Another section offers the chance to compare and contrast Bill Brandt's staged realism with Larry Herman's more spontaneous style of social-documentary photography. Brandt's picture of a family in a Birmingham slum in 1939 is called Evening Meal, although it was taken in the afternoon with the curtains drawn and every member of the family carefully posed.

Herman is an American who came to England in 1968 and settled in Sheffield. He has spent the past five years documenting ethnic-minority communities throughout Britain.

"One Friday night someone came out of the mosque and told me to get into his car. He took me to this illegal fowl auction in an old factory. They were selling live birds for *halal* meat. The place was packed, but nobody took any notice of me. I just stood there in one spot, snapping away with a Leica."

One result is on show here — a duck with a particularly long and vulnerable neck being plucked from a cage by the auctioneer. It's a mesmerising image of another England most know nothing about.

Sounds escape from BBC dungeons

CLASSICAL CDs
Andrew Clements

ALREADY this year the record industry's countdown to the millennium has produced Great Pianists Of The Century from Philips, and Great Recordings Of The Century from EMI; now we have Great Performers Of The 20th Century in a series modestly called BBC Legends.

Whatever one thinks of the morality of a public-service broadcaster exploiting one of its most important assets purely for profit there are plentiful reasons to be grateful that some of the treasures which have languished unheard in the BBC's archives for far too long will finally be brought into circulation.

Over the next three years, 65 discs will be issued in the series. The first 10 span almost 30 years of broadcasting, from a studio recording of Bach's B minor Mass conducted by the Romanian George Enescu (with a line-up of soloists that included not only the superb French soprano Suzanne Danco and the tenor Peter Pears at the height of his expressive powers, but also Kathleen Ferrier just two years before her death), to the most recent, Sviatoslav Richter's 1979 Schubert recital from the Royal Festival Hall.

There are no real duds in this initial batch; almost all of them contain something worthwhile. Fans of particular performers will seize upon works that their idols never recorded commercially. Constantin Silvestri, underrated nowadays, turns in a tautly dramatic 1963 account of the Manfred Symphony; Rudolf Kempe provides a reminder of what a great Brahms conductor he was with the Fourth Symphony from his years as the BBC Symphony's chief conductor, while admirers of John Barbirolli in Mahler will snap up his 1969 account of the Third Symphony from the Free Trade Hall in Manchester.

But the Mahler performance here of authentically historic stature is Jascha Horenstein's Eighth. This performance from the Albert Hall in 1959 was one of the sparks that kindled the Mahler revival in the sixties. Horenstein seems to be forging a tradition of performing this gargantuan piece singlehanded: everything he does has conviction and an effortless breadth and shape.

The Brahms Piano Quintet from 1974 catches both Clifford Curzon and the Amadeus Quartet in fiery, unbuttoned form, taking risks in the concert hall that they would not have countenanced in the antiseptic conditions of the recording studio; Schubert's Trout Quintet has more mellowness and repose, yet everything about it is shaped with perfect poetry. And Richter's accounts of three early Schubert sonatas, with the first of the Moments Musicals added as an encore, is quite beyond criticism. Like the Horenstein, it's a disc that deserves legendary status.

The best of the BBC Legends

Bach: Mass in B minor BBC Chorus/ Boyd Neel/ Enescu (BBCL 4008-7) (2CDs) £17.99
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If you would like to order any of these CDs (p&p £1) contact CultureShop, see ad on page 32

A slice of Salome's passion

CONCERT
Tim Ashley

THE role of Salome, Strauss's necrophiliac nymphet, is one of the most gruelling challenges a soprano can face. The composer famously remarked that he envisioned "a 16-year-old with the voice of an Isolde", and the requisite combination of vocal prowess, youthful sensuousness of timbre and psychological subtlety has eluded all but a few.

The Danish soprano Inge Nielsen, who is well on the way to becoming one of the role's more formidable interpreters, turned in an electrifying performance of the final scene at the end of a Beethoven/Strauss concert, conducted by her compatriot Michael Schonwandt, at the Royal Festival Hall at London's South Bank Centre.

Her voice isn't colossal — though it soars easily above the stave (there were some blazingly beautiful top notes) — but it has a tangy lower register and a penetrating quality that cuts through Strauss's orchestration at its densest. Her characterisation is terrifying. She looks at once alluring and baleful in a blood-red dress.

The text is initially laced with a savage, animalistic irony that gradually gives way to heart-stopping nostalgia and rapturous lyricism as she contemplates Jochanaan's mangled beauty. The ending, when she drawls the words in sated, erotic exhaustion, made me squirm in my seat.

This is great singing, and we urgently need to hear her in the opera in its entirety. We also need to hear more of Schonwandt, too, for he's an excellent Straussian, sparing you none of the music's emotional intensity and revelling in its opulent tone colouring and shivery dissonances.

The extract from Salome was preceded by Tod Und Verklärung, the trickiest of Strauss's tone-poems, considered a shocker in its day, though now emerging as perhaps too self-consciously Wagnerian.

There was real elation and terror in the opening sections, while the closing peroration seemed for once neither a moment too long nor overblown. Schonwandt is good at Beethoven as well, and gave us an exhilarating performance of the Fourth Symphony that was dense and breezy, jubilant and thoughtful.

The Philharmonia were on superlative form for him, with exquisitely placed woodwind solos threading their way through Beethoven's symphony, and lustrous, sensual brass and strings illuminating every facet of Strauss's music.

The social ascent of a hungry heroine

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

VANITY FAIR (BBC1) is as good as you get. Unlike its heroine, of course.

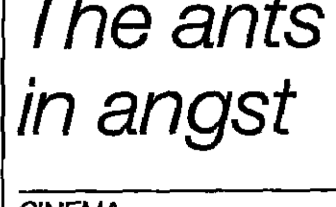
Becky Sharp (the vivid Natasha Little) leaves Miss Pinkerton's Academy for Young Ladies, having mischievously taught her class to say "Kiss my arse!" in French (a *jeu d'esprit* by Andrew Davies, the screenwriter), and starts her social climb. She is a clever little monkey. The higher a monkey climbs, the more you see its bottom, and this is true of Becky, too.

Fat Jos Sedley (touchingly played by Jeremy Swift), who so nearly proposes to Becky in Vauxhall Gardens, is a succulent prey who gets away. At first Vauxhall is a raucous, toothless, bawdy Cruikshank cartoon. Then, as Jos and Becky stroll together, black against the blowing torches, it is an exquisite silhouette.

Sometimes just the look of the thing, directed by Marc Munden and photographed by Oliver Curtis, can take your breath away.

Having missed her unpractised pounce on a porker, Becky now has her eye on a fine, young buck. A girl must eat. When you consider the opportunities open to a penniless, clever young woman in those days, your skin crawls. They are written on gravestones.

Thackeray's mother thought Vanity Fair revolting, so that's a recommendation. It is also enchanting.



Natasha Little as Becky Sharp in the BBC adaptation of Thackeray's Vanity Fair PHOTOGRAPH: GARY MOYES

Sharp was followed by another tenacious climber, **Norman Ormal** (BBC1), a Tory politician. Norman is a frightful fart, who rises by his own power of jet propulsion.

Harry Enfield played Norman and a wide circle of candid colleagues. Feel free to pick your favourites. I was particularly tickled by Dame Shirley Mess, all hurricane hair and exploding toasters, and randy Alan Swagg, lounging in his library like a lizard, and oilier than a duck in the Gulf.

Norman is a composite, like a trades union resolution. He force-feeds his daughter dog food, takes bribes from Al Bung, leaves his wife for a topless typist. As little John Selwyn Swott, who can barely see over the bottom of the screen, says: "It was nothing less than a deep personal tragedy for him . . . Heh . . . heh . . . I'm sorry, I'll have to do that again."

This was Craig Brown's debut as a screen writer and good fun too, if a little out of date. Labour are already shaping up nicely for a show of their own.

Taggart (ITV) is at its happiest when it puts you off your food. A Long Time Dead was about organ transplants, after which even the detectives didn't fancy a nice fry-up.

I do feel the Crawford Hotel was in need of a visit from a frank restaurant critic. The chef and sous-chef were slain in swift succession. The waiters were mostly unconscious, having their kidneys harvested. And there was a large selection of bottled eyeballs in the cold store.

Men and Their Sheds (Channel 4) was one of those tiny treats that tend to get trampled on. Apparently Australian blokes are often found at the bottom of the garden, like fairies.

Sometimes the shed seems a gentle anteroom to death. Geoff stays there until he falls asleep in front of the dying fire, his dreaming dog on his knee. Mrs Geoff phones — these sheds are well equipped — to check he is still breathing.

Shed men are not trying to avoid female society. There is often something described as "she" in the shed. Geoff's dog, Lady. Mitch's motorbike.

Mitch was a bloke with a beard and a beer. He said: "There's a few women in my past that called themselves shed widows. I was always in here, mucking around with this, mucking around with that. When the TV came in, one of them left me. Couldn't take it. It wasn't even my TV." He pondered the problem. "I think she wanted to go for other reasons." Get away.

Shooting blunt arrows at the Labour balloon

THEATRE
Michael Billington

THERE is only one thing leftwing dramatists hate more than a Tory government. That, of course, is a Labour government. And Tariq Ali and Howard Brenton have wasted no time in penning a flailing and unfocused satire on the Blair administration for failing to deliver the red-blooded socialism it never actually promised: after only 18 months, their ejaculations seem somewhat premature.

Satire demands moral rage on the part of its practitioners and a visible corruption in its target. In Ugly Rumours at London's Tricycle Theatre you feel Ali and Brenton are simply registering their pique at New Labour's failure to live up to their personal dreams. And although they score one or two definite bull's-eyes — such as Labour's humiliating subservience to Rupert Murdoch and to Bill Clinton's foreign policy — for the most part you feel it is still too early to accuse the Government of some kind of grand betrayal.

The spine of their argument is an assumed personal and ideological hostility between Tony Blair and his Chancellor, Gordon Brown. Tony-Boy, as he is here called, is seen as a smarmy airhead at the mercy of his spin-doctor, Polly Mendacity. Brown, dubbed Gordon Macduff and spun by one Charlie Ferrago, becomes the possible keeper of the flame of old-fashioned socialism who holds secret conclaves with union leaders and Lionel Jospin, but is eventually outflanked and driven into Scottish exile.

Whatever divisions there may be between Blair and Brown, they hardly warrant the Shakespearean parallels here invoked. And, as if recognising that, Ali and Brenton change tack and accuse Blair of a grand plan to dispense with parliamentary government altogether and govern purely through focus groups and an annual democracy day in the Dome. Given Labour's plans for devolution, elected mayors and Lords reform, it seems a bit rich to accuse them of a dislike of the democratic system.

Occasionally Ali and Brenton's barbs hit home. The vision of Murdoch as a man who simply wants to use Britain as a base to buy Europe is also horribly plausible. And Blair's telephonic subservience to a trigger-happy Clinton and nervous question of "Do you mind telling me where your targets are?" is too close to truth for comfort.

But much of the writing smacks of wild desperation and has none of the grand grotesquerie of a play such as Brenton and David Hare's Pravda. One is left to enjoy such modest pleasures as Sylvia Syms's double impersonation of a batty Thatcher haunting the Downing Street cellars and of a Queen terrified of the idea of renascent Princess Dianas being sighted like so many reborn Elvises.

Neil Mullarkey endows Blair with a cipher-like charm while Gordon Kennedy plays Brown as a ruggedly tortured soul. But there is something provisional and premature about this satire: you feel the time to really go for the jugular will be after Labour has grown, if it does, bloated and diseased with power.

I was cagey about Tom Stoppard's The Invention of Love when I saw it in the Cottesloe. But, seeing it again at London's Theatre Royal, I was profoundly moved. Richard Eyre's fine, much-recast production and Stoppard's densely allusive text have more room to breathe in the larger space.

It is also possible to see more clearly what this dream-like evocation of the life of A E Housman is really about. At its heart lies a melancholic, meditative reflection on the mystery of existence. In the great, first-act scene where the dead A E H communes with his younger self, he tells him it is hopeless to seek "the lost autograph copy of life's meaning which we might recover from the corruptions that have made it nonsense". But the supreme irony is that while the older man urges the younger to pluck the fruit while there is still time, he is incapable of altering either events or his own character. He knows that he is doomed, by the repressions of his nature and the circumstances of late-Victorian England, to nurse a hopeless passion for his Oxford friend Moses Jackson.

But the art of the play lies in the way one idea bleeds into another. Stoppard is also concerned with the notion expressed in his punning title. Does love really exist before its literary invention? And is love itself capable of endless inventiveness? Oscar Wilde, whose presence haunts the play, tells Housman, "Bosie is my creation, my poem". Equally, the unexceptional Jackson becomes half of Housman's life and the source of his best poetry. Wilde and Housman are presented as diagonal opposites — the extrovert aesthete and the introvert scholar — yet both are strangely joined by their belief in the transfigurative power of love.

John Wood reveals both the transcendent nature of Housman's love of textual scholarship — exulting in the discovery of a misplaced comma in Catullus — and his pain at life's missed chances. When he says of Jackson "I would have died for you but I never had the luck", Wood seems to burn with emotional regret.

The ants in angst

CINEMA
Gaby Wood

***WHEN** an ant is lying on a couch and speaking about its troubled childhood in the voice of Woody Allen, anthropomorphism must have reached its limit. **Antz**, the first in DreamWorks's project to make computer-animated films for adults, sets its good-humoured parable in a place where the cult of the individual is at its most improbable: Central Park.*

The voices for these creatures are provided by a fantastic cast, including Woody Allen, who plays Z, the disgruntled weakling worker who questions everything. He falls for Princess Bala (Sharon Stone), and swaps places with his soldier friend Weaver (Sylvester Stallone) in order to be near her. He gets sent into battle, becomes an unwitting hero and finds himself on a quest for "insectopia" with the spoilt princess.

Insectopia turns out to be a trash can. The sugar on a discarded doughnut acts as a sandpit and a rollercoaster ride is provided by a worm winding in and out of an apple. Meanwhile, back at the colony, the dictatorial General Mandible (Gene Hackman) is out to "purify the colony" of its "weak element". The ants are following Z's example and planting the seeds of revolution in each other's minds. "Now", they announce, "the workers control the means of production!"

This entertaining story of a rebel ant is a kind of capitalist anthem with socialist words. Antz is, in its own description, "your basic boy meets girl, boy likes girl, boy changes underlying social order story".

In *Snake Eyes*, Nic Cage plays Rick Santoro, King of Atlantic City. He's a fast-talking, overheated, corrupt and charming cop, with all the razzle-dazzle of his native town — a gold mobile phone, a wife and a girlfriend.

Everybody loves Santoro. But on the night of a boxing match he gets caught in the middle of a conspiracy. The US Secretary of Defence is assassinated, at a time when Santoro's old friend Kevin Dunne is supposed to protect him.

For the sake of his buddy, Santoro puts himself on the case. Loyalty, he jokes, is his only vice. All of this happens during the stunning opening sequence of Brian De Palma's film. The first 20 minutes is filmed in a single tracking shot, following Santoro on his winding, wily way around the boxing arena.

Cage's energy is unstoppable, and he has created in Santoro an engrossing anti-hero — a character who is clearly the good guy, but unrepentant about his dodgy deals. As Santoro investigates, he hears and we see the story from different points of view: the other sides to the initial shot that followed only him. He pieces it together faithfully and despite himself, and turns out to be a better cop than anyone had bargained for.

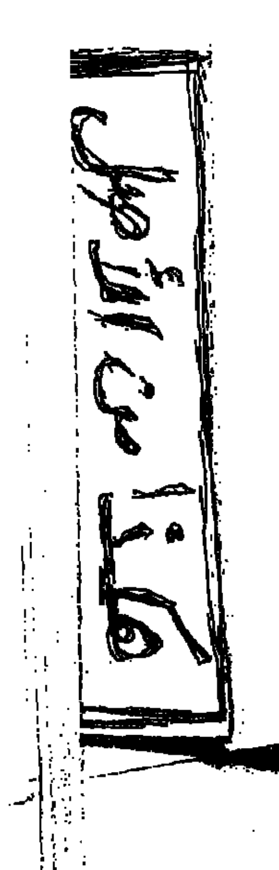


ILLUSTRATION: ANN HOBDAY

Past echoes of the steppes

Mark Cocker

AS YOU drive across the central portion of Hungary's Great Plain towards the medieval city of Debrecen it's difficult to believe that this thoroughly mechanised, modern agricultural environment — with its endless and sterile patchwork of maize or sunflower prairies — was once the main base for the cavalry hordes of Attila the Hun. It's only when you cross to the eastern bank of the River Tisza that the countryside yields any real clues to the region's extraordinarily deep and complicated past.

The Tisza itself, particularly its millennial power to bring flood and alluvial silts, is one of the principal factors behind the Great Plain's unrelieved flatness. But during the 16th and 17th centuries the river and its floodwaters were given new destructive licence when the region suffered decades of conflict between the Ottoman Turks and the Christian forces of Magyar and Habsburg nobles. These wars brought devastation to the area's once extensive forest and deep disorder to its settled patterns of agriculture.

In an era of political and environmental turmoil the floodplain of the Tisza became a pestilent swamp, a refuge of bandits and wolves, and acquired the name *puszta* — meaning "abandoned" or "deserted" — by which it is still known today. However flood-control measures in the 19th century eventually gave new shape to this ancient landscape. Although the increased alkalinity of the soil left it fit only for the pasturage of livestock, the puszta acquired legendary status as a kind of Hungarian wild west where Magyar *gauchos* tended vast herds of the region's unique raksa sheep and grey cattle, with their spectral colours and long sweeping horns.

It is this avatar of the Great Plain's spirit that is preserved and celebrated in the Hortobágy National Park, which was created in 1973 and covers about 70,000 hectares. Today the flocks of raksa, with their curly fleeces and corkscrew horns, have become barely more than tourist attractions, while the great herds of grey cattle, which once loomed through the summer heat-haze like a vast ghost on the steppe's horizon, have so dwindled that they've become the focus of European Union quotas for "nature conservation beef".

But the environmental importance of Hortobágy puszta is undiminished. In spring and autumn it hosts hundreds of thousands of migrant birds, and in summer it blooms with an endemic steppic flora. The reedbeds and marshes support about as many breeding spoonbills as all of the Netherlands, more white storks than the whole of France, and twice as many bitterns as Britain. Rather than a desolate waste the puszta now summons images of one of the great wildlife landscapes in Europe.

At Angyalháza in the southern section of the park is one of the most intact stretches of the habitat remaining, and it gives a sense of the Hungarian steppe in its prime. But although this is a place of awesome character it's not one that yields readily to the photographer. Looking through the viewfinder you're confronted with a two-tone image sliced through the middle by a remote and featureless horizon.

You quickly realise that all the potency in this immense landscape lies not in any inherently dramatic features but in their total absence, and also in the vast sky-scapes above your head. The travel writer Patrick Leigh Fermor warns of the dangers in attempting to convey these breathtaking cloud panoramas, then goes on in typically sumptuous fashion to write of "riderless squadrons descending in slow motion to smouldering and sulphurous lagoons where barbicans gradually collapse and fleets of burning triremes turn dark before sinking".

Chess Leonard Barden

JUDIT POLGAR hasn't been much in the news since Wijk aan Zee, where she was second to Vishy Anand. Polgar then took time off to iron out weaknesses in her game and return fresh at the US Open in Hawaii. Rest brought zest as she shared the title with 8/9, the first time a woman has taken this venerable event; while the VAM tournament in the Netherlands turned out even better.

Polgar destroyed her opponents in the first half of the double-rounder, winning impressively against Jan Timman, Tal Shaked and the great Boris Spassky (whom she defeated in a match in 1993). Polgar is just outside the top 10 GMs and has been held back as a major world title contender only by her poor results against Garry Kasparov, Anand and Vladimir Kramnik. When she was 10 years old this column forecast her as a future challenger to Kasparov, and it could still happen.

J Polgar v B Spassky

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nc6 3 Bb5 a6 4 Ba4 Nf6 5 0-0 Be7 6 Re1 b5 7 Bb3 d6 8 c3 0-0 9 h3 Nb8 10 d4 Nbd7 11 Nbd2 Bb7 Not falling for 11 . . . Re8?? 12 Bc2?? (12 Bxf7+) the double oversight of their game in 1993.

12 Bc2 Re8 13 Nf1 exd4?! Most GMs would keep the central strongpoint intact by Bf8 or c5. **14 cxd4 d5 15 e5 Ne4 16 N3d2 Nxd2 17 Bxd2 c5 18 Ne3 g6 19 Ng4 Bf8 20 dxc5 Bxc5 21 Nh6+ Kg7 22 Qf3 f6 23 e6 Nf8 24 b4 Bb6 25 e7!** This sacrifice effectively gives White an extra rook around the BK: Black's a8 rook never moves. **Rxe7 26 Rxe7+ Qxe7 27 Re1 Qd8 28 Ng4 Nd7 29 Qf4 Kf7 30 Qh6 Qg8 31 Qh4 Qh8 32 Nh6+ Kf8 33 Qg4 f5 34 Nxf5!** Qf6 If gxf5 35 Bh6+ Kf7 36 Qxf5+ Nf6 37 Qe6 mate.

35 Bg5 Qc3 36 Re2 Bc7 37 Ng3 Ne5 38 Qe6 Nf7 39 Be7+ Kg8 40 Nh5! gxh5 41 Bf6 Resigns. The threats Bxc3, Qf5, Qe8+ and Bxh7+ are too much.

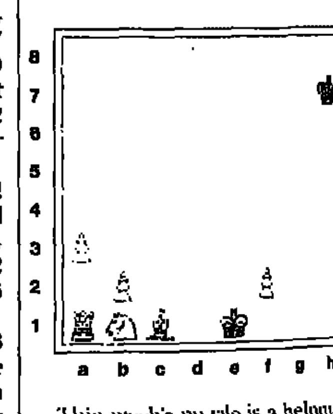
Harriet Hunt, the world girls U20 girls champion, won the second board bronze medal with 9/12 at the Elista Olympiad, the best result by any English player. Hunt is already the number two Western-born player after Sweden's Pia Cramling.

Michael Basman's UK Challenge, for which 35,000 children competed in their schools last year, is Britain's most successful event in encouraging girls to play chess.

The trio who won the youngest girls age groups in the 1998 Challenge have just gone on to win an open Surrey event, defeating all their boy rivals. Selina Khoo won the U8, Jessica Dodson the U9, and Sarah Hegarty the U10, each with 5/5.

Jessie Gilbert, the talented 11-year-old whom the British Chess Federation plans to omit from the World Girls U12 Rapid Championship in Paris this month, was girl co-champion (against rivals up to age 18) in the 1997 Challenge and runner-up in 1998.

No 2549



This week's puzzle is a helpmate (by J Gemmell, 1995) where Black moves first, then both sides co-operate until White checkmates on his fourth turn. Expert readers of The Problemist found it quite hard.

No 2548: 1 Qxh8+ Ke7 2 Rd7+! wins after Qxd7 3 Qxb8 (Black no longer has a mate threat) or Kxd7 3 Ne5+ Kc7 4 Qxb8+ Kxb8 5 Nxc6+ and 6 Nxb8.

Quick crossword no. 444

Across

1 See lush coffee (anag) — quick light dish (6,7)
8 Racing forecaster (7)
9 Board game (5)
10 Overtake — I don't know! (4)
11 Become too full (8)
13 Academic fusspot (6)
14 Courage — drink! (6)
17 Tie in race (4-4)
19 Adhesive (4)
21 Downy duck (5)
22 Worry or bother (7)
24 Captain of merchantman (6-7)

Down

1 Domestic animal (3)
2 Shown up (7)
3 Badger's burrow (4)
4 Contend (6)
5 Weaker or less fancied contestant (8)
6 Wild (if normal tame) (5)
7 Not here (9)
10 Unrealistic fantasy (4,5)
12 Small (town or sleigh) (3-5)
15 Afghan fundamentalist body (7)
16 Small chicken (6)
18 Mountain range (5)
20 Opening (4)
23 Listener! (3)

Last week's solution

WILDDUCK MYTH
A E E A I O E
GLASS LANGUOR
E T E I O N E
SHORTCHANGED
C E T O L I
HARROW ACCEPT
O R T U L Y
POLICYHOLDER
C O H A A M A
HARPIST BREAK
O E D C L N I
PINK THREATEN

Bridge Zia Mahmood

THE Lederer Memorial Trophy took place this month at the Young Chelsea Bridge club in Earls Court. The event provides tremendous value for spectators, since the country's leading players compete against a wealth of international talent. The contest is unique in that it is a mixture of teams and pairs scoring.

My predecessor in these pages, the great Rixi Markus, featured in a bizarre deal from the 1986 Lederer. Her side contrived to double a contract of 3NT and, through force of circumstance, allowed it to make on the opening lead. Game all, dealer North (*next column*).

Rixi was North, Martin Hoffman South, and the England internationals Graham Kirby and John Armstrong occupied the West and East seats respectively. The bidding took this remarkable course:

South	West	North	East
Hoffman	Kirby	Rixi	Armstrong
		1♥	Pass
1♠	2♣	2♣	3NT
Pass	Pass	Dble	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North
♠ Q 3
♥ K J 8 7 6
♦ 7 3
♣ K Q 9 8

West
♠ A K 10 7
♥ 5
♦ A J
♣ 10 7 5 4 3 2

East
♠ 8 5 4
♥ A Q 9 4 2
♦ Q 6 2
♣ A 6

South
♠ J 9 6 2
♥ 10 3
♦ K 10 9 8 5 4
♣ J

No, that isn't a misprint. Rixi was not going to be balked of her natural rebid by so trivial a matter as right-hand opponent making it first, so she and Kirby both bid two clubs. She also doubled Armstrong's jump to 3NT, which was based on the pious hope that, for once, Kirby would have his bidding. He was disappointed in that respect, but the good news was that following Rixi's insufficient bid, Armstrong was able under the rules to direct Martin Hoffman to lead a club. This allowed the declarer to set up the club suit before the defence could knock out his diamond stoppers, so the contract was made for a score of 750 to East-West.

That did not look promising for Rixi's team, but at the other table the auction developed like this:

South	West	North	East
Forrester	Priday	Lodge	Bird
			1♥
		Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Dble	Rdble	Pass	Pass
3♦	Dble	Pass	
Pass			

This auction looks even more bizarre than the one at Rixi's table, but the explanation is that Tony Forrester and Steve Lodge were playing a system in which North's opening pass showed the values for an opening bid! Bearing that in mind, Forrester had heard his opponents bid hearts and clubs, so he hoped that his side would have a fit in spades or diamonds. Hence his second-round takeout double, but his partner's hand failed dismally to live up to expectations. The penalty from three diamonds doubled was 800, so Rixi's team had won the board! ©

America's most wanted . . . In 1958, policemen in Montgomery, Alabama arrested Martin Luther King and his wife Coretta for 'loitering'. The arresting officers didn't know who King was PHOTO: CHARLES MOORE

On the road to the promised land

James Urquhart

Dreamer
by Charles Johnson
Canongate 236pp £14.99

REVELATION can happen through shock. Charles Johnson's title ostensibly alludes to Dr Martin Luther King, on whose life this novel is based; but Dreamer goes beyond facts lifted from the minister's career. The novel floats with dreaming aspiration but is freighted, too, with the dreaming that cushions against reality, and is only understood on waking.

Dr King is in Lawndale, a cockroach-infested, ghettoised Chicago suburb, to conduct his campaign of non-violent civil disobedience. Fresh from civil rights triumphs in the South, he is stunned by the depth and divisiveness of hatred in a city simmering with riots and murder. This landscape may derive from the Book of Revelation, but Johnson's text is closer to Bunyan's dream of the Pilgrim's Progress, as he focuses upon the spiritual crises of his four main characters.

Matthew Bishop ("as bland and undistinguished as a piece of furniture") introduces King to Chaym Smith, a man so physically similar to King that he had been persecuted as the minister himself. Reeling from the shock, King agrees to Bishop taking Smith home, to prepare him to be King's body double.

Smith asks uncomfortable questions. He is erudite, working-class, knows his Bible, has studied Zen in a Kyoto monastery, has served time, and earned his red badge in the Korean war. He espouses violence and, as middle-class, college-educated King's doppelgänger, asks the unthinkable: "You ever thought we might be second-class citizens because generally we are second-rate?"

Bishop gains charisma through his psychological internment with Chaym. Chaym and King, rarely meeting, apprehend deeper cores of identity through contemplation of each other's situation. The story of Cain — "the first revolutionary to defy favouritism and an unjust authority" — is embodied in Chaym's disenfranchised circumstance. He recognises the Doctor's terrible self-effacement in needing to become a conduit to God, but he cannot share in King's famous dream of the Promised Land.

Johnson never circumvents the danger inherent in King's struggles against white death threats, black envy and the FBI's continual harassment, but he writes luminously of the minister's spiritual striving through intolerable pressures. Like a skiff exploring history's more hidden currents, Johnson's poetic language drifts with care over the moiling currents of King's intellect, leaving in its wake a wonderful, prismatic novel, exhorting and testifying, but never preaching.

A century of scientific arrogance

Robin McKie

What Remains to be Discovered
by John Maddox
Macmillan 434pp £29

LET'S FACE IT, there is nothing to beat a smart alec. Just ask Stephen Hawking. He became a best-selling author largely because he named his book A Brief History Of Time. Read this tome and you will know everything worth knowing, it implied.

And so it is with Sir John Maddox. Recently retired as editor-in-chief of Nature, Maddox has turned his 25 years as overlord of published research into a tome that appears to claim mastery of all scientific knowledge. The boundaries of knowledge are finite and lie within these covers, its title suggests.

The idea is a daft one — as even Maddox admits. "What remains to be discovered is not, of course, the same as what will be discovered," he states. The truth, thank God, will be far stranger than we can currently imagine.

To illustrate this point, consider what might have been included in a 100-year-old version of Maddox's book. A Victorian attempt to predict future scientific discoveries would have merely noted there were some discrepancies in our understanding of heat radiation. Apart from that, everything would have seemed hunky-dory when it came to energy research.

Then, in 1900 in Berlin, Max Planck showed that energy, like atoms, was made up of discrete sub-units which he called quanta. This discovery triggered an intellectual revolution that ended with the creation of quantum physics, the uncertainty principle and the atom bomb. Only a historian empowered with the most acute hindsight could claim these ideas were foreseeable in the 19th century. In short, predicting the course of scientific enterprise is a dicey business.

Nor will things change in future — which would seem to render this work a rather pointless exercise. Fortunately, his thesis remains valid because Maddox is concerned not with future outcome but with cataloguing current discoveries and in pinpointing where there are gaps or flaws.

That said, Maddox's survey of modern science is masterly, a catalogue that is comprehensive but never dull, illuminative but never repetitive, ranging across the universe from the Big Bang to the origin of life, and from computing to biotechnological research. He is neither alarmist about the future progress of science, or Whiggishly over-optimistic about its impact on humanity. This is a balanced, expert analysis.

Of course, it is also an extraordinarily arrogant work. Only someone who is utterly sure of his or her erudition and expertise would attempt to write an overview of an entire century of scientific discoveries and then point out all the bits that the scientists had not quite got right.

This is a master operator, a writer and polemicist resolutely sure of his talents, untroubled by self-doubt. And jolly good luck to him, too. Nothing succeeds like a smart alec, after all.

Going for the throat

Elizabeth Young

Carpe Jugulum
by Terry Pratchett
Doubleday 286pp £16.99

TERRY PRATCHETT has finally achieved the status of a national institution as our foremost comic novelist. It would be worse than uncharitable to mutter, like the mother in the Louis MacNeice poem presented with her fifth baby, "Take it away; I'm through with overproduction". Yet, to the twisted soul of the bibliophile, it is never wholly easy to see a beloved author pass from cult status into mass cultural acceptance.

Having feasted rapaciously and virtually in private, sometimes for years, on the work of writers such as Pratchett, Ruth Rendell, Don DeLillo or Alice Munro, one feels a pleasure when they are finally accorded their well-earned acclaim that is always tempered by a faint sense of loss. Ungraciously, the bibliophile starts seeking another gifted unknown to collect. But then bibliophilia is a pathological condition marked by covetousness, élitism and other undesirable, seriously psychopathic traits.

Carpe Jugulum is the second Discworld novel to come out this year, and the 23rd book in the best-selling series. Pratchett's great creation, the Disc, is a "world and mirror of worlds", a flat earth carried through the endless starry reaches of space on the back of a giant turtle. Sea pours endlessly over the rim of the Disc and at its icy centre is The Hub, where the gods live in a place called Dunmanifestin. Many of the books are set in the Disc's capital city, famously evoked in the quotation "A man who is tired of Ankh-Morpork is tired of ankle-deep slurry."

The various continents and cities of the Disc are always more than recognisable, despite some stunning rips in the space-time continuum: Ephebe and Tsort approximate to classical Greece and Rome. Genua is strongly reminiscent of New Orleans. The desert kingdom of Djelibeybi is somehow overwhelmingly Egyptian, and the lost continent of Fourex brings immediately to mind Alan Coren's operatic epic Oedipus Bruce. ("Queen Glenda's me mum. I've only gone and married me flaming mummy!").

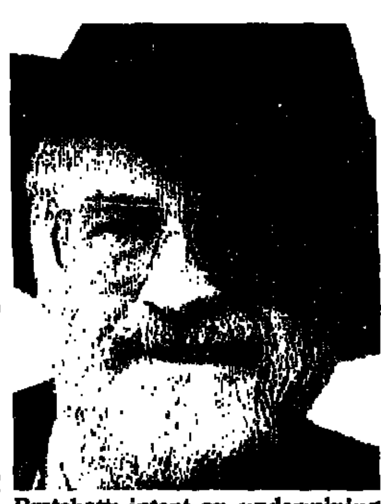
The Disc is peopled by, well, people — and by witches, wizards, trolls, assassins, werewolves, elves, dwarves and every other stock character from fantasy with certain species characteristics or abilities to practise magic.

The best-loved and most familiar characters pop up all over the Disc in the other books. Three of the strongest characters are witches — kindly, salacious Nanny Ogg, stately Granny Weatherwax, and the droopy, New Age feminist Magrat Garlick. ("'When shall we three meet again?' . . . 'Well, I can do next Tuesday.'")

Despite outward appearances these cannot really be called fantasy novels, partly because Pratchett is too intent on undermining all the conventions of the genre and partly because they mirror so effectively the current concerns of our own society. For example, Men At Arms considers political correctness and equal opportunity employment (for trolls, werewolves and so on), while Moving Pictures features the corrupt growth and widespread influence of Hollywood. Transposing such issues to another, wholly original, world is the creative equivalent of fuelling a huge blast-furnace single-handed.

The real delight of the Disc novels is the way in which Pratchett parodies and plays with all the tropes of literature and literary theory. Guards, Guards satirises the noir-type private-eye novel, while Witches Abroad considers narrative causality in fairy-tales. Wyrd Sisters loosely utilises the plot of Macbeth, while Lords And Ladies is based, more substantially, on A Midsummer Night's Dream, detouring to attack the current tyranny of style in society by way of parallel-worlds theory. Although tightly plotted, each novel is classically baggy with content ranging through anything from myth, fable, particle physics, tourism, camel-driving and religious wars to the prevalence of shopping malls.

Carpe Jugulum, which loosely translates as "Go For The Throat", follows the now inimitable Discworld formula. Aware that everyone knows exactly what to do when faced with a vampire, Pratchett proceeds to overturn our hoary certainties. Lancre is taken over by the vulgar, upwardly-mobile vampire family of the Count de Magpyre, attended by their unfaithful retainer Igor, a man of many parts — that is,



Pratchett: intent on undermining literary conventions

he doubles as a Frankenstein's monster. In aligning the witches to combat this new outrage, Pratchett finds Magrat, now married to King Verence, trying to combine her witching career with motherhood, having just produced Esmerelda Margaret of Lancre. Pratchett also manages to deal with the myth of the phoenix, the nature of sin, Scottish tribal wars, the dilemmas of the contemporary Christian Church, the clichés of monster films and the increasingly complex psychology of Granny Weatherwax.

Pratchett's position as a leading comic novelist now seems as permanently assured as that of P G Wodehouse. His Discworld adheres closely to an established comic structure which allows him to comment on human society from a position of infinite flexibility.

Unlike many humorists his fundamental attitude is kindly rather than misanthropic; he is quietly, unobtrusively ethical, and consistently promotes ordinary decency; he is highly amusing without resort to crude stereotyping. All this, aligned to his turbo-charged imagination and heightened awareness of literature and literacy, suggest that he will remain an enduring, endearing presence in comic literature. As Granny Weatherwax says "Words is important".

Guardian Fiction Award 1998

THE **shortlist for the 1998 Guardian Fiction Award for best new work by a British, Irish or Commonwealth novelist includes two established writers, William Boyd and Alan Hollinghurst, and four lesser known talents, Derek Beaven, Jackie Kay, Liz Jensen and Edward St Aubyn. Their books are diverse in content and style, but there are similarities too, with the quest for identity, the difficulties of remembrance, and the healing power of love underpinning several of the books.**

The winner of the award, who receives a prize of £5,000, will be announced in December.

Derek Beaven, Acts of Mutiny (Fourth Estate, £14.99)
Beaven's novel tells the story of a young boy, Ralph, and his strange journey to Australia on an ocean liner in 19[illegible] [illegible] cast adrift with me now and must trust in my navigation," the book's narrator tells us. The novel is about the affair Ralph witnesses between his mother and her lover, a US naval officer, but also casts a glittering eye on childhood, memory and the false innocence of English society in the fifties.

Jackie Kay, Trumpet (Picador, £12.99)
Kay's book, which draws on the real-life story of Billy Tipton, recounts the tale of a celebrated Glaswegian trumpeter, Joss Moody, who is revealed after his death to have been a woman. Her novel explores issues of love and identity in a multi-layered narrative that is the literary equivalent of a piece of jazz. A stunning debut novel by an award-winning poet.

William Boyd, Armadillo (Hamish Hamilton, £16.99)
Armadillo is Boyd's seventh novel and his first [illegible] years. It is a darkly comic book about a loss adjuster called Lorimer Black who imagines that he should be able to cover himself against anything life can throw at him. He uncovers a fraud, and his life starts to disintegrate amid the cast of grotesques he encounters. A funny, feelgood novel and a delightful portrait of contemporary London.

Alan Hollinghurst, The Spell (Chatto, £16.99)
Hollinghurst explores the hopes and betrayals of gay life with a sure touch, characteristically luminous prose and an intelligence that is almost voyeuristic in its close attention to the lives of his characters. He tells the story of Alex, a civil servant whose life is turned upside down when he meets Danny, falls in love and discovers Ecstasy.

Edward St Aubyn, On the Edge (Chatto, £10.99)
This witty satire targets new ageism in all its forms. Peter is a disaffected merchant banker who falls in love with the mysterious but irresistible Sabine. When she disappears, he embarks on a mission to find her that takes him to the Findhorn Institute and the Esalen Foundation in California, where he encounters an ill-assorted company searching for a meaning in their vapid, materialistic lives. St Aubyn enjoys himself enormously with the language of therapy.

Liz Jensen, Ark Baby (Bloomsbury, £15.99hbk, £6.99pbk)
A comic novel that sounds ludicrous but delivers both laughs and a thoughtful take on end-of-millennium angst. Britain is in the grip of a great "Fertility Crisis". Bobby Sullivan has illegally exterminated a monkey (they have become substitute children), and flees London for the northern town of Thunder Spit, where he discovers the sexual delights of twins who live in a haunted house. Realists should give it a miss, but fabulists will find it, well, fabulous. Jensen is a former sculptor; this is her second novel.

Potency in the south

Nicholas Blincoe

The Breaker
by Minette Walters
Macmillan 356pp £16.99

Blue Lightning
edited by John Harvey
Slow Dancer Press 403pp £7.99

IF ANYONE **ever needed a respected critical term for Minette Walters's novels of passion, dysfunction and repression, they could do worse than settle on "southern gothic". That is southern English gothic, of course, but who would have thought there could be so much seething going on beneath the still waters of the Dorset coastline?**

The Breaker revolves around a single question: just why is the handsome young man on the clifftop sporting such an obvious erection? Is it because of the body on the beach below? Or the proximity of two young boys? It could be a response to the beautiful horsewoman he meets. It surely cannot have anything to do with her horse. Perhaps, then, the clue lies in the mobile phone he rubs suggestively against his crotch.

No English novel has made the penis into such a prominent feature of the Dorset countryside, other than the latest Alan Hollinghurst novel. Walters's penis is more inscrutable than his. She exploits the idea that the penis has a life of its own; its every twitching both appalling and enthralling its owner. And she turns this private anxiety into a public spectacle. The erection becomes the maypole around which all other plot strands are entwined.

Walters's skill is her ability to manipulate the prurience of the reader. If you think the worst, she has you hooked. The potency of her novels derives from their source in popular art forms, not just the crime novel but also the melodramatic and gothic traditions. This gives her work a vitality that survives translations to other platforms — for instance, television. Could the competition to play the man with the penis become the search for Scarlett *de nos jours*?

The art form with the greatest potency is said to be music: cheap music. Blue Lightning, a collection of short stories with a musical theme, puts the dictum to the test. The writers are chiefly crime novelists, although they are not necessarily writing crime stories. Among the big draws, Walter Mosley has produced another meditation on morality featuring the character Socrates Fortlow. John Harvey, the collection's editor, has written an elegant Resnick story set around Soho's jazz clubs. Liza Cody finds traces of a murder in the mix of bad drugs and big egos that characterised the English blues explosion. Ian Rankin settles the mystery behind the murder during the Rolling Stones' set at Altamont.

The pleasures of this collection don't end with the stories; there are notes at the end in which writers talk about music they like. One discovers that crime writers like either jazz or C&W but rarely both. And these influences do inform the stories. Stella Duffy, an enthusiast of Japanese *noisecore*, writes a story in which the screaming of a child and the feedback loops of the music destroy all hope of dialogue.

Neville Smith wrote the screenplay for Gumshoe. His story in Blue Lightning hits the perfect note, the potent cheap note. Like much of the writing in this collection, this is storytelling at its funniest, its most fluent and its slyest.

An English love of mediocrity

Andrew Marr

The English
by Jeremy Paxman
Michael Joseph 266pp £17

IT WOULD be a useful thing if all book reviews carried a note at the end clarifying the reviewer's relationships and/or attitude to the author. "Spittle was married to Dibble's current wife and has been awaiting this moment for years." Or: "The reviewer's last book was viciously reviewed by the author of the current work, which is why we chose her." In this case, my note would simply read: "The reviewer is intensely jealous of Jeremy Paxman."

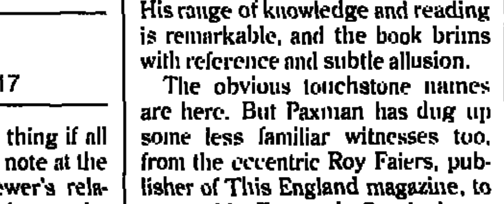
Here we have a multi-talented, rich and languid TV star, who is so self-confident he can publicly admit his attacks of depression. So it is with a genuine sense of regret that I have to report that this is an intelligent, well-written, informative and funny book. What Paxman has done is to accumulate a vast quantity of writing about Englishness, and conduct interviews with interesting people on the subject, and then reorder it all into a flowing and persuasive extended essay, reflective and wry in tone. There is little argument and no conclusion, or none that I could understand. But that isn't a criticism — it's simply not that kind of book. It is one, rather, to chew on, dip into, quote from and exploit in arguments not yet begun, a storehouse of information and an arsenal of deflating home truths. His range of knowledge and reading is remarkable, and the book brims with reference and subtle allusion.

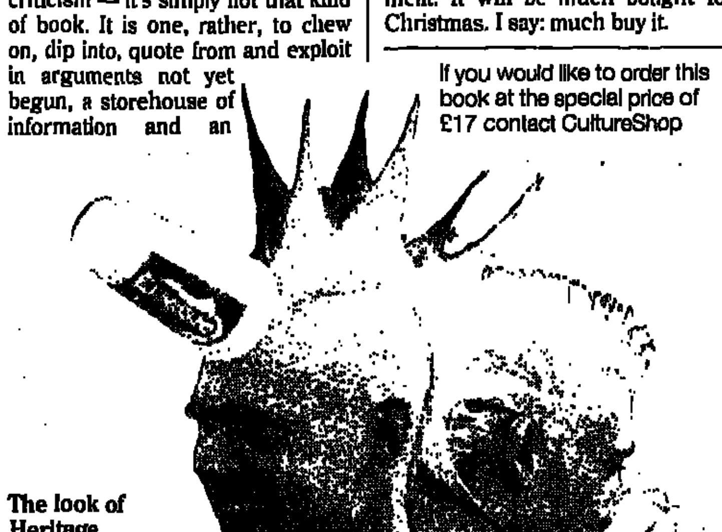
The obvious touchstone names are here. But Paxman has dug up some less familiar witnesses too, from the eccentric Roy Faiers, publisher of This England magazine, to poor old Emanuel Swedenborg, who believed there was a special heaven reserved only for the English. He's also found (how?) a man whose enthusiasm for corporal punishment — *le vice anglais* — was so extreme that he has had to have an entire bottom transplant.

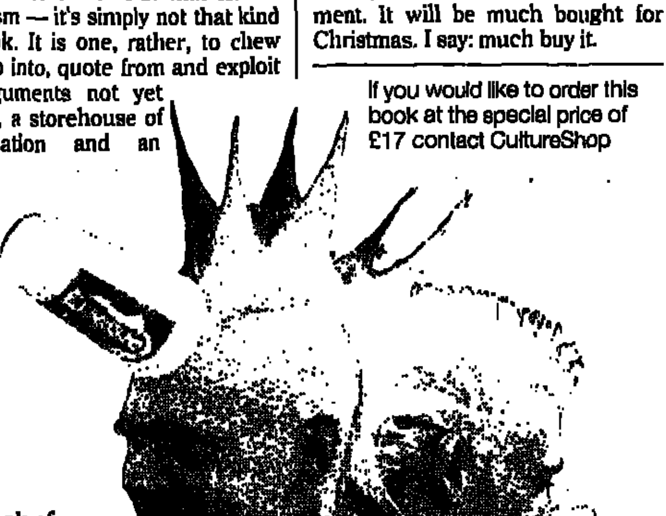
One of the most telling interviews is with George Steiner at Cambridge, who scoffs that "this land is blessed with a powerful mediocrity of mind. It has saved you from communism and it has saved you from fascism. In the end, you don't care enough about ideas to suffer their consequences." Paxman, I suspect, is fully English in that respect and it is difficult to fix his views through veils of irony and half-affectionate, half-exasperated mockery.

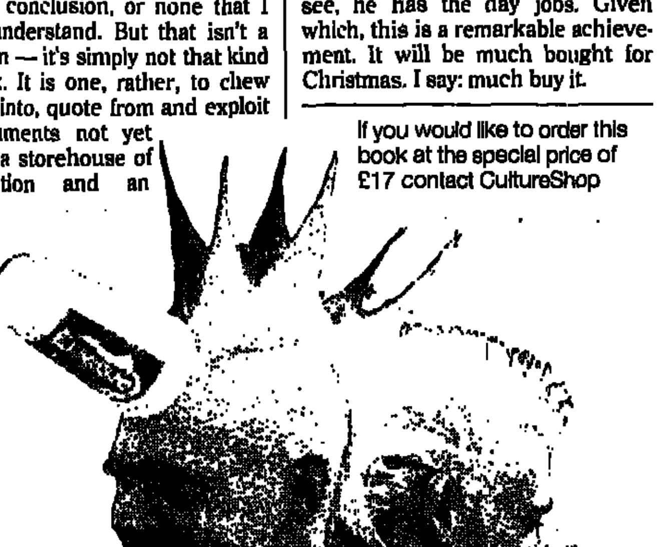
In an ideal world, it would have been good to have more of Paxman the reporter, plunging waist-deep into modern living. But then, you see, he has the day jobs. Given which, this is a remarkable achievement. It will be much bought for Christmas. I say: much buy it.

If you would like to order this book at the special price of £17 contact CultureShop









The look of Heritage England

Paperback fiction

Carrie O'Grady

Eve's Apple, by Jonathan Rosen (Granta, £6.99)

RUTH SIMON "has trouble with food". It tempts her, seduces her, only to betray her by adding to her eight-stone frame and what she calls her "chubby thighs". Her partner Joseph has trouble with her trouble; he can't stop brooding on her weight as she pushes leaves of lettuce around her plate. They make an intriguing pair, these walking wounded, and Rosen never loses sight of their fragile humanity as he looks beyond them to toy with ideas of health and pain, both physical and mental. Hitchcock would have filmed this novel masterfully; it deserves nothing less.

New York Mosaic: Three Novels, by Isabel Bolton (Virago, £12.99)

NEVER before published in the UK, these three novels first appeared in 1946, 1949 and 1952. They were greeted with delight by the critics, who saw in Bolton a new Henry James, a new Virginia Woolf. There are echoes of both writers here, especially in the careful descriptive passages in which the setting merges imperceptibly with a character's thoughts. Sadly, though Bolton never achieved the timelessness of James or Woolf, and these novels are now more reminiscent of Dorothy Parker's work: exquisitely stylish, but a little baffling, like a puzzle box from another age.

The Church of Dead Girls, by Stephen Dobyns (Penguin, £5.99)

IT'S THE old, familiar story: small northern American town is gripped by fear and suspicion as girls begin to disappear, culminating in shocking violent denouement. Dobyns may have had Stephen King's trillions of readers in mind when he signed the contract, but he is a clear, unfussy writer, recognising, like Truman Capote, that stark facts can be more upsetting than melodrama.

Vanished, by Mary McGarry Morris (Fourth Estate, £6.99)

AUBREY WALLACE is daydreaming on a blazing hot roadbed in Vermont when a young girl dressed only in a shirt runs out of the woods towards him. "Hey mister," she says, "let's go for a ride," and so begins a nightmare journey across America. We watch it all through the eyes of Aubrey, a slow thinker, and when the girl, Dotty, snatches a young child he vaguely perceives that they have become a family of sorts. Dotty, though, has other plans. The heartbreak of lost innocence pervades this brilliant, disturbing novel, which crackles with anger and frustration.

The No 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, by Alexander McCall Smith (Polygon, £8.99)

"HERE I am," thinks Mma Ramotswe, "the only lady private detective in the whole of Botswana, sitting in front of my detective agency." She does not sit for long: missing husbands and wayward girls are rife in Gaborone. Most of these stories are simple parables with pleasingly moral resolutions, but the real delight of the book is in the astute, down-to-earth character of Mma Ramotswe herself.

Writing on the wall

Liz Jobey

Dreaming With His Eyes Open:
A Life of Diego Rivera
by Patrick Marnham
Bloomsbury 366pp £20

DIEGO RIVERA'S reputation as an artist of the people is chiefly based on the large public frescoes he painted in Mexico, as the country's leading muralist during the 1920s and 1930s, when the cultural revolution was still at its height, though already failing politically. This period, with its cast of artistic characters, has become more familiar in the last two decades after the widespread publication of the photographs of Tina Modotti and Edward Weston, and the cult surrounding Rivera's second wife, Frida Kahlo, whose recent canonisation in print has not only made her more famous than her husband, but revealed him to have been faithless, selfish and rather less of a socialist hero than previously suggested.

According to Carlos Fuentes, in his introduction to her illustrated diaries, Kahlo used to say she had "suffered two accidents in her life, the streetcar accident [in which a handrail pierced her torso and left her permanently damaged] and Diego Rivera". The collision of these two artists, temperamentally and physically so opposed, makes up the last third of Patrick Marnham's biography. By this time his accounting of their respective peccadilloes is beginning to flag.

Rivera's need for a "wife" figure and at least one concurrent mistress was the pattern of his life. In Paris, where he lived between 1911 and 1921, he replaced the mother of his first child, during her pregnancy, with the mother of his second, and then abandoned all three (the first child died in infancy), for Mexico, where he married Guadalupe Marin within a year. During her second pregnancy he began an affair with Tina Modotti, after which Marin divorced him, leaving him free to marry Kahlo, 20 years his junior.

If all this seems less than germane to the life of the great Marxist muralist, there is a sense from Marnham that it's payback time. Rivera was an unrepentant fabulist, who embroidered and invented his experiences throughout his life, and one of Marnham's tasks has been to rescue the truth from the more fantastical versions put about by Rivera and repeated by earlier biographers which have burnished his reputation since his death.

His artistic talent was obvious from childhood, and at the age of 19 he won a state bursary to study in Europe, arriving in Spain in 1907, by his own account, "twenty years old, over six feet tall and [weighing] 300 pounds".

He spent several years in Paris but it was in Italy in 1920, as Marnham has it, that Rivera found his destiny, standing in front of the frescoes of Masaccio and Uccello, Giotto and Raphael. After this brief opportunity to study the technique he decided to go back to Mexico immediately and put himself at the services of the revolution. He arrived just in time to benefit from the national education programme which included public art commissions, and began a series of commissions some of which would remain unfinished at his death.

What Marnham makes clear is that Rivera, however he would have wished it otherwise, was above everything a fresco-painter in search of a wall. His desire to put his painting to political use in a country where the various factions threatened to destroy, as they did during the Spanish civil war, the system they were formed to uphold, meant he never kept one patron for long.

But even Rivera couldn't repaint capitalism red. In Detroit, Henry Ford's son paid for a series of murals depicting car assembly, having just cut over quarter of a million jobs and reduced the wages of his remaining workers by a third. In Manhattan, Rivera might have succeeded covertly with his chosen theme of "Man at the Crossroads" for the RCA building at Rockefeller Center had he not made his preferred direction clear by adding a portrait of Comrade Lenin to lead the way.

Diego Rivera: a fresco-painter in search of a wall

When great minds click alike

Kate Glasspool

The Metaphysical Touch
by Sylvia Brownrigg
Victor Gollancz 443pp £16.99

IT'S A BOLD **writer who takes on philosophy and the Internet and, with liberal helpings of Kant, Kafka and The Starlight Barking, engineers an online relationship of such originality and insight.**

Sylvia Brownrigg's first novel is less romance than a meeting of minds. Both her protagonists are, in their own ways, lost souls: JD, a depressive computer programmer who has lost his job, and Pi, a philosophy academic who has lost home, books, dissertation and cat in a terrible fire that has ravaged Berkeley. Both find themselves unable to communicate to friends and family; both take refuge on the Net.

For Pi, trying to piece together a life in Mendocino with 40-year-old divorcee Abbie and her young daughter Martha, the Net is the first thing that engages her intellect, that allows her to communicate with old friends — without the trauma of seeing her words in print or of encountering people face to face. For JD, it is where he posts his diary (or Diery, as he punningly calls it) — a sort of experimental suicide note.

Having established these two narrative strands, Brownrigg takes inordinately long to bring them together. Not until page 161, when the online connection is finally made, does the plot orient itself and gather pace.

This structural hiccup aside, Brownrigg's writing is sharp and not without humour. The online exchanges between JD and Pi — covering every subject from Julie Andrews ("sex goddess manquée") and Cruella de Vil to the heresy of not caring about whales — have a spontaneity and wit that is entertaining, addictive, and yet instantly forgettable.

Brownrigg's novel is a timely chastisement to those technophobes among us who dismiss new technology, and its attendant geeks, as representing a threat to the old world order. Here is a valid exploration of the noumenal realm of the Internet that is both challenging and highly imaginative. But there is an ephemeral quality about her writing that one can only ascribe to the intangible nature of her subject. Ultimately, it seems, this is a book without substance. Click the mouse on "send" and the words would be lost for ever.

Unbearable lightness

Linda Grant

Isaiah Berlin: A Life
by Michael Ignatieff
Chatto & Windus 356pp £20

IN THE 1950s and 1960s Isaiah Berlin cut a figure that we don't seem to have a need for any more: the People's Intellectual. He went on the radio and delivered difficult-to-follow lectures in a Latvian stutter. People turned on in droves. He was the personification of what the masses thought a philosopher should be: a receptacle for wisdom, someone who gave you guidelines for living. He was cosmopolitan, gossipy, had been around for virtually every important event of the 20th century and managed to make liberalism sound brainy.

Berlin's authorised biographer is Michael Ignatieff, the closest we're going to get to a people's intellectual in times when the distinction between high and popular culture has been abolished and know-it-alls and show-offs have been hounded off the airwaves. Ignatieff spent 10 years talking to Berlin for this book.

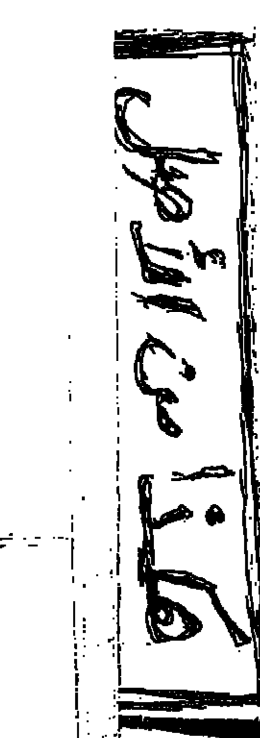
It seems to be accepted now that Berlin's ideas won't last. They're too shallow. He became famous outside Oxford for saying that there were hedgehog people and fox people. Foxes knew lots of things but hedgehogs knew one big thing. Berlin longed to be a hedgehog but was naturally a fox. He could have become a journalist but was turned down for a job on the Guardian by C P Scott. Perhaps he was just too interesting for British philosophy.

His life seems to have been entirely about divisions within himself and the world he passed through. He was a Jew from the Latvian port of Riga for whom the automatic pro-Soviet sympathies of his generation foundered on the rock of his having actually witnessed the Russian Revolution at first hand. In 1946 he went back for the first time since his childhood and experienced the cold terror of the Party amongst the artists and intellectuals he met. He [illegible] punctiliously attended synagogue for the major festivals. He distrusted nationalism, except when it came to Israel. He was a passionate man, but crippled by dislike of his personal appearance and fear of emotional involvement. He appears not to have lost his virginity until around the age of 40.

Still chaste in his mid-30s, on a post-war trip to the Soviet Union, he met the poet Anna Akhmatova, then 56. They stayed up all night talking and, by dawn, she was in love with this visitor from the West with the soul and mind of a Russian. He was in love too, but on a purely intellectual plane. She wrote a series of five short poems about the bitterness of unrequited passion. She endured, he finally got married [illegible] later to a wealthy, beautiful Jewish divorcée, as close as one might get to an actual Rothschild.

At the end of his life, Berlin told Ignatieff that he was happy because he was superficial: "I live more on the surface than people suppose," he said. Ignatieff interprets this as a kind of lightness of being, which attracted so many people to him.

The undertow of his detachment was his sharing of the survivor's guilt. Why should he have got through what he considered the worst of centuries unscathed when so many of his friends had gone under? If his family had not left the Soviet Union, he might have had considerably less pleasure but more iron in the soul. Berlin leaves us with the most uncomfortable of thoughts: perhaps moral (and personal) conflicts are not resolvable, but part of our condition — all of us standing on ground that is subsiding.



Tennis Paris Indoor Open

Pistol Pete beaten in Rusedski duel

Stephen Bierley

IN THIS city of extraordinary architectural and artistic marvels, the distinction of Greg Rusedski's straight-sets victory over Pete Sampras, the world No 1, in the Paris Indoor Open last Sunday is unlikely to be considered for much longer than a few days. But a marvel it certainly was.

"Without a doubt this was the biggest and best match of my career," said Rusedski, who won 6-4, 7-6, 6-3 in an hour and 44 minutes of sustained excellence. It was his first victory over the American in seven meetings, and it was no fluke. Sampras acknowledged as much: "[illegible] was hot and he [illegible] me."

Rusedski's win means Britain may for the first time have two players in the ATP Tour Finals in Hanover this month. Rusedski won $400,000 and gained more than 500 world ranking points, including bonus points, taking him to 2,379, which is behind Tim Henman (2,427) but ahead of Yevgeny Kafelnikov (2,259). The Russian, beaten 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 by Rusedski in the semi-finals, has to win in Moscow and hope the two Britons lose in the first or second round in Stockholm.

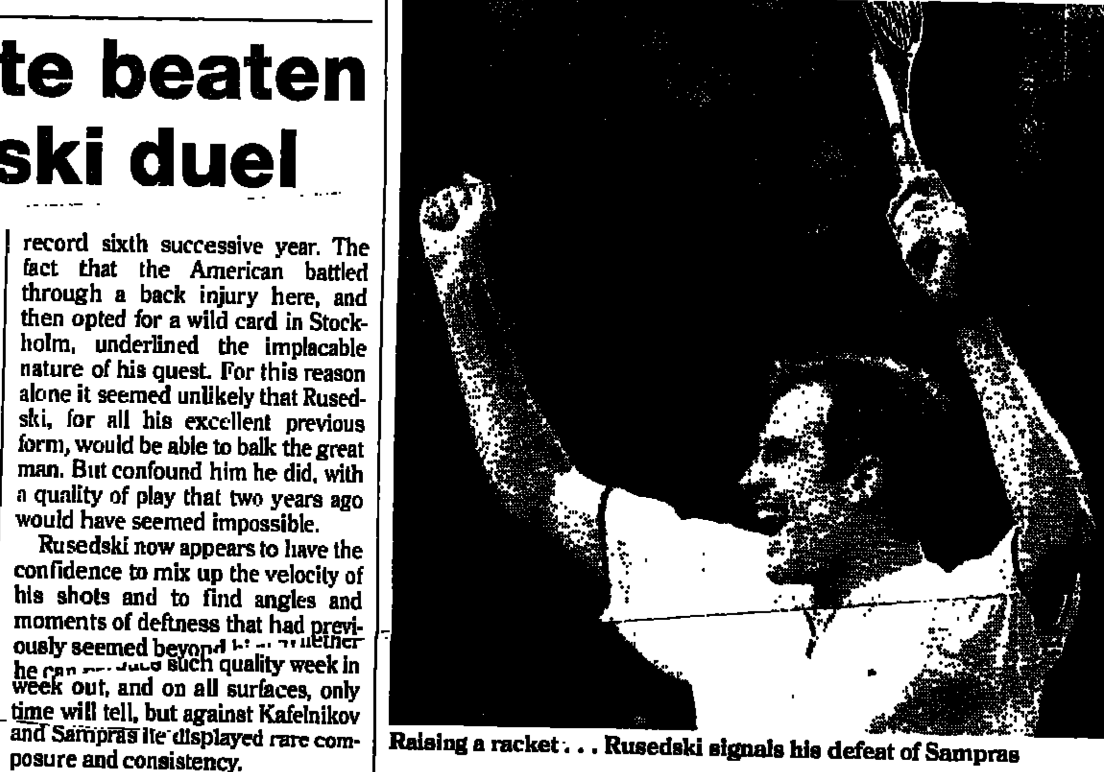
The results in Paris have ensured that Slovakia's Karol Kucera has joined Sampras and Andre Agassi in Germany, together with the Spaniards Carlos Moya and Alex Corretja and Chile's Marcelo Rios.

Rusedski's victory stunned almost everybody. Sampras, the winner here last year, had been insisting all week that victory in Paris was an integral part of his crusade to keep the No 1 spot for a record sixth successive year. The fact that the American battled through a back injury here, and then opted for a wild card in Stockholm, underlined the implacable nature of his quest. For this reason alone it seemed unlikely that Rusedski, for all his excellent previous form, would be able to balk the great man. But confound him he did, with a quality of play that two years ago would have seemed impossible.

Rusedski now appears to have the confidence to mix up the velocity of his shots and to find angles and moments of deftness that had previously seemed beyond [illegible] whether he can [illegible] such quality week in week out, and on all surfaces, only time will tell, but against Kafelnikov and Sampras he displayed rare composure and consistency.

Sampras suddenly hit trouble in the ninth game of the first set when a running forehand winner gave Rusedski a break point. Sampras immediately double-faulted. Rusedski, the British No 2, saved four break points on his serve at the opening of the second set but two huge forehands by the American paved the way to a 4-2 lead. Unaccountably, when serving for the set, Sampras played a shockingly loose game, including two double faults. Rusedski's eyes have never been brighter.

He needed no second offering of such gifts, won the tie-break with splendidly resolute play and polished off the third set in a rush for his first win in a Super 9 event, tournaments second only to the Grand Slams. It was an extraordinary performance, and who knows where it may propel him? He has the capacity for constant surprise.



Raising a racket . . . Rusedski signals his defeat of Sampras

New curves in Steffi's graph

STEFFI GRAF crowned a triumphant comeback in the Leipzig Open by beating Nathalie Tauziat in straight sets, in Sunday's final to win the tournament for the fifth time.

Graf, playing her first event since an operation on her right wrist which put her out for nearly two months, won 6-3, 6-4 in 83 minutes to record her 20th victory over this summer's Wimbledon finalist in as many encounters.

The former world No 1, who started in Leipzig as 22nd in the rankings, has now won all 25 matches she has played in this German event, where she also triumphed from 1990 to 1993. Tauziat, the second seed, earned five break points in the opening game. But, cheered on by 5,000 partisan fans, Graf saved them all and went on to break the French player in the seventh game before claiming the first set.

The second set was close until Graf, relying on her powerful ground strokes and precise passing shots, managed the telling break in the final game to achieve the 105th tournament win of her career and her first since the Penn International in August.

In the quarter-finals of the tournament, Graf became the world's top women's prize-money earner. That win took her total to $20,347,942 — $3,000 more than Martina Navratilova's record.

Lara reprieve as SA tour goes ahead

David Hopps

BRIAN LARA and Carl Hooper were reinstated as West Indies' captain and vice-captain on Monday night after a week of intense negotiations finally salvaged a ground-breaking tour of South Africa that had been on the brink of cancellation.

The bitter stand-off over pay and conditions between the West Indies Cricket Board and Lara's rebel players, who had set up camp in a Heathrow hotel during [illegible] financial dispute, ended when the squad boarded a flight to Johannesburg.

Lara and Hooper were unceremoniously sacked last week by an implacable West Indies Board, led by its autocratic president, the Jamaican lawyer Pat Rousseau, after they had sparked an impromptu strike by switching flights en route from Bangladesh to South Africa. But Rousseau on Monday night conveniently depicted the whole affair as a "misunderstanding".

He announced: "A settlement has been reached which will allow the tour of South Africa to go ahead. Lara and Hooper will be reinstated and no disciplinary action will be taken against any of the players."

The settlement, thrashed out after another exhausting round of talks at the Radisson Edwardian Hotel salvaged West Indies' first Test series in the Republic since South Africa's readmission to international cricket six years ago and the staging of multiracial elections.

The tour could be saved only if all involved saved face, and the agreement, tirelessly brokered by Ali Bacher, chief executive of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, achieved just that.

Bacher, armed with letters of appeal to the West Indies players from President Mandela and his own conviction that the three-month tour would arouse a passion for the game among the black population, became exasperated as the dispute dragged on, and he took an increasingly central role. The talks involved Rousseau, the Jamaican captain Jimmy Adams, Barrie Gill, Lara's agent, and Collyer-Bristow, City solicitors.

Until Monday virtually every positive development had emanated from South Africa. The insistence of Edward Griffiths, head of South Africa's state television network, that only a full-strength West Indies side would be acceptable to sponsors and advertisers scotched any possibility that the West Indies board might refuse to negotiate and send a second-string squad.

So the tour has been saved, but the players displayed selfishness in putting an historic tour in jeopardy just to squeeze out a better financial deal.

● England's Graham Thorpe and Mark Ramprakash set a new record of 377 for a partnership by any touring team playing in Australia as the visitors batted out the final day at Adelaide Oval to force a draw against South Australia. The First Test begins in Brisbane on November 20.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

A farewell present for Chelsea from Laudrup

WHAT a fairy-tale return it was for Brian Laudrup when he went to the city of fairytales to play for Chelsea in the second round, second leg, of the Cup Winners' Cup. He scored the only goal of the match to secure a place for the London club in the quarter-finals of the competition for the third time in five seasons. His effort knocked out FC Copenhagen — and hours later the homesick Dane signed up as their striker.

Laudrup's goal came in the 32nd minute, and after the break the home side piled on the pressure. However, the holders held out to triumph 2-1 on aggregate. Although now unbeaten in 15 league and cup games since their defeat at Coventry on the opening day of the English football season, Chelsea will need to perform a lot better than they did in the Danish capital when the competition resumes in March.

In the Champions League, Manchester United thrashed Brondby 5-0 at Old Trafford to remain top of Group D and to give their hopes of qualifying for the quarter-finals an enormous boost. Alex Ferguson's team were four up inside half-an-hour after David Beckham got the ball rolling with a superb free-kick.

Dwight Yorke set up Andy Cole for another and he later headed one in himself after linking up with Phil Neville for the latter to run in the third. Paul Scholes got the fifth after a brilliant solo effort in the second-half — United's 17th in three games against the Danish side this year.

But there was no such luck for Arsenal. They dropped from the top to the bottom of Group E after being brushed aside 3-1 by Dynamo Kiev. The Gunners, without top guns Dennis Bergkamp, Nicolas Anelka, Marc Overmars and Tony Adams, were chasing the game once Martin Keown conceded a penalty in the 26th minute.

Sergei Rebrov converted and Alexander Holovko made Arsenal pay for missed chances with a second goal after 61 minutes. Andrei Shevchenko scored from a free-kick after Stephen Hughes had given the visitors spirits a lift.

Three of the five British clubs taking part in the Uefa Cup crashed out in the second round, second leg, leaving only Liverpool and Rangers in the competition. The Merseysiders survived against Valencia on away goals but had Steve McManaman and Paul Ince sent off, the latter facing a lengthy ban because of his poor disciplinary record in international matches.

Claudio Lopez blasted in the opener on 45 minutes for Valencia, but McManaman got the vital breakthrough with a header from a cross by Michael Owen, and Patrik Berger scorched in a second. McManaman, Ince and Amedeo Carboni were sent off following a fracas deep into injury-time. Lopez levelled the scores at 2-2 after his free-kick rebounded off the post into keeper David James and back into the net.

Rangers are Scotland's last hope in the competition after Celtic saw their European ambitions washed away in torrential rain as Zurich struck four times in the second half to win 4-2 on the night and [illegible] aggregate. Rangers' game against Bayer Leverkusen at Ibrox was spiced by the fact that the latter were Germany's last representatives in the competition. The Scottish side went through after a 1-1 draw. Their 2-1 first-leg victory proved priceless against Leverkusen, who launched wave upon wave of attack but Rangers held on for an 3-2 aggregate win.

Premiership leaders Aston Villa went out after a classy Celta Vigo display at Villa Ground. The visitors went ahead with a goal from Juan Sanchez after 26 minutes. Stan Collymore levelled four minutes later, but Alexander Mostovoi put the Spaniards ahead with a free-kick before half-time. Lubo Penev extended the lead after the break and Villa could not come back, losing 2-3 on aggregate.

Attempts by Leeds United to turn around their 1-0 deficit from the first leg in the Stadio Olimpico against AS Roma failed despite the visitors being reduced to 10 men for half of the game. Roma had Pierre Wome sent off just before the break, but Leeds could not capitalise as the match ended goalless.

MORAL probity will play a pivotal role in the selection of teams for next year's Tour de France. The race organisers are prepared to accept a drastically reduced field in an attempt to avoid a repetition of the drug scandals that badly marred this year's event. "If there are only 15 teams in the race, so be it," said the organiser Jean-Marie Leblanc while presenting next year's plans. "Cycling must show it is capable of a moral revolution, or it will disappear."

AZUMAH NELSON, Africa's most celebrated boxer, has retired at the age of 40. The Ghanaian, three times a world champion and winner of a string of other honours in his 20-year professional career, vowed never to make a comeback.

MARGARET JENNINGS, one of only five women motor racing drivers to hold the coveted 120mph Brooklands badge, has died, aged 89.

Football Premiership: Arsenal 1 Everton 0

Arsenal upwardly mobile

Martin Thorpe at Highbury

ARSENAL's continued shyness in front of goal has not prevented the champions from gatecrashing the Premiership table, and last Sunday another trademark 1-0 victory lifted them into second place behind Aston Villa.

The goal that beat an unadventurous Everton came from the left foot of Nicolas Anelka, the fifth successive league game in which the Frenchman has scored. But, perversely, the feeling remains that Arsenal still need to sign a more consistent goalscorer to maintain their promising start.

They were lucky to be meeting an Everton side who came for a draw and never threatened to take advantage of Arsenal's lapses by scoring. Duncan Ferguson plopped one header on top of the bar and flashed another wide, but Arsenal carved out the bulk of the chances and fluffed all but one. This time it did not prove as costly as in the recent draw against Southampton and in Europe on three occasions. But it remains a problem.

If this sounds hard on Anelka, then that does not detract from the fact that his winner was another contender for Goal of the Season. But this is Anelka's problem: he is a scorer of great goals, not a great scorer of goals.

Arsenal's scoring record is striking in the wrong way. Out of 16 games in the Premiership and Europe this season they have failed to score in four, scored once in seven and twice in three. The 3-0 results against Manchester United and Newcastle are beginning to look like fantasies.

Better news for Arsenal is that their injury list is shortening. Marc Overmars as well as Anelka were back last Sunday, with Dennis Bergkamp on the bench. So there were only two differences from Arsenal's first-choice team, with Gilles Grimandi playing perhaps his best game for the club in place of Tony Adams, and Fredrik Ljungberg filling in for Bergkamp.

Shaking off the disappointment of last week's defeat in Kiev, Arsenal began brightly, as Dave Watson headed off the Everton line from Ljungberg's header after only three minutes. Three minutes later Arsenal scored what turned out to be the winner. Lee Dixon broke down the right and fed the ball inside to Ray Parlour, who cleverly let it run before feeding Anelka.

The 19-year-old left the hapless defender Richard Dunne for dead as he headed for the left edge of the area and struck a rare left-foot shot past Thomas Myhre.

With Everton happy to position eight men behind the ball for much of the time, Arsenal continued to push forward, creating problems.

Myhre blocked twice in succession from Anelka, who then shot wide from deep in the area after being released by Ljungberg's precise through-ball. Shortly afterwards Parlour had a penalty appeal turned down as Watson grabbed his arm.

Everton introduced Danny Cadamarteri's pace to the right wing for the second half. But Arsenal continued to threaten. Emmanuel Petit saw a promising shot blocked, Anelka missed the target again, and Patrick Vieira glanced a header about an inch wide. Still Arsenal won, leaving Everton only with victory in the yellow-card count at 5-3.

United we stretch . . . Alan Shearer displays his balletic skills as he challenges Gary Neville. The match between Newcastle and Manchester ended goalless, enabling Arsenal to move up the table

Football Results

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP
Arsenal 1, Everton 0; Aston Villa 3, Tottenham 2; Blackburn 1, Coventry 2; Charlton 0, Leicester 0; Leeds 2, Sheff Wed 1; Liverpool 1, Derby 2; Man Utd 0, Newcastle 0; Nottm For 0, Wimbledon 1; Southampton 3, Middlesbro 3; West Ham 1, Chelsea 1.
Leading standings: 1, Aston Villa (played 11-points 26). 2, Arsenal (12-23); 3, Man Utd (11-22).

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE
First Division
Barnsley 1, Bury 1; Bristol City 1, Wolves 6; Crewe 0, Swindon 2; C Palace 4, Portsmouth 1; Huddersfield 2, Ipswich 2; Norwich 2, Bradford 2; QPR 2, Bolton 0; Sheff Utd 2, Tranmere 2; Stockport 4, Port Vale 2; Sunderland 3, Grimsby 1; Watford 2, Oxford 0; WBA 1, Birmingham 3.
Leading standings: 1, Sunderland (17-37); 2, Ipswich (17-32); 3, Birmingham (18-32).

Second Division
Chesterfield 3, Lincoln 0; Colchester 1, Macclesfield 1; Fulham 1, Bristol R 0; Gillingham 2, Wigan 0; Northampton 1, Wycombe 1; Oldham 0, Man C 3; Preston 4, Burnley 1; Reading 3, Bournemouth 3; Stoke 3, Luton 1; Walsall 3, Millwall 0; Wrexham 1, Blackpool 1; York 1, Notts County 1.
Leading standings: 1, Stoke (17-34); 2, Fulham (15-33); 3, Preston (16-32).

Third Division
Cambridge 3, Barnet 2, Carlisle 0, Halifax 1; Darlington 1, Brighton 2; Exeter 2, Southend 1; Hartlepool 2, Plymouth 0; Hull 0, Leyton Orient 1; Rochdale 1, Mansfield 0; Rotherham 4, Scarborough 0; Scunthorpe 2, Chester 1; Shrewsbury 2, Brentford 0; Swansea 0, Peterborough 0; Torquay 0, Cardiff 0.
Leading standings: 1, Rotherham (17-30); 2, Scunthorpe (17-30); 3, Cambridge Utd (17-30).

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE
Aberdeen 2, Dunfermline 1; Celtic 6, Dundee 1; Dundee U 2, Motherwell 2; Hearts 2, Kilmarnock 1; St Johnstone 0, Rangers 7.
Leading standings: 1, Rangers (13-27); 2, Kilmarnock (13-23); 3, Celtic (13-20).

SCOTTISH LEAGUE
First Division
Airdrie 0, Falkirk 3; Clydebank 0, Hamilton 0; Raith 1, Hibernian 3; St Mirren 1, Morton 0; Stranraer 0, Ayr 1.
Leading standings: 1, Hibernian (14-28); 2, Ayr (14-26); 3, 14-26).

Second Division
Alloa 1, Arbroath 1; Forfar 1, Queen of Sth 0. Partick 0, East Fife 1; Inverness CT 3, Stirling Alb 1.
Leading standings: 1, Livingston (14-33); 2, Inverness CT (14-32); 3, Clyde (14-22).

Third Division
Brechin 1, Albion 0; Cowdenbeath 0, Dumbarton 2; E Stirling 0, Berwick 0; Queens Pk 3, Montrose 0; Stenhousemuir 2, Ross Co 4.
Leading standings: 1, Ross County (14-30); 2, Brechin (14-30); 3, Stenhousemuir (14-26).

Rugby League Great Britain 16 New Zealand 36

Lions are torn to shreds

Andy Wilson
at the Reebok Stadium

ON THE face of it Andy Goodway and Glenn Hoddle have little in common. Goodway has never employed a faith healer or recorded a duet with Chris Waddle, and it is hard to imagine Hoddle propping for Oldham. However, after Saturday's record defeat by New Zealand, giving the Kiwis a first series victory in this country since 1971, Great Britain's coach is under similar pressure to his football counterpart and, as in Hoddle's case, much of it is self-inflicted.

Goodway could point to reasonable explanations for the second-half disaster in which the Kiwis ran in 28 unanswered points: the lack of time to work with the players because the series immediately followed the Super League play-offs; injuries that robbed him of three top players and the club game in the southern hemisphere which remains far ahead of the British Super League.

He could also reflect on the narrowness of the margin between success and failure in the modern game: Great Britain had approached perfection in securing a 16-8 half-time lead, only for an over-ambitious pass by Keith Senior, a bad kick by Andy Farrell and poor ball security on Iestyn Harris's part to hand New Zealand the positions for the three tries which turned the game on its head.

But any sympathy for him will inevitably be dissipated by the games he has played with the media over team selection, not revealing his line-up until the last minute; on the other hand, New Zealand's coach Frank Endacott named his team well in advance each time.

Endacott came into this series with much uncertainty surrounding his future after his removal as coach of the Auckland Warriors. However, he now looks rather more secure than Goodway. All the Kiwi players are keen for him to stay on, and the New Zealand Rugby League will be under pressure to employ him full-time until the 2000 World Cup.

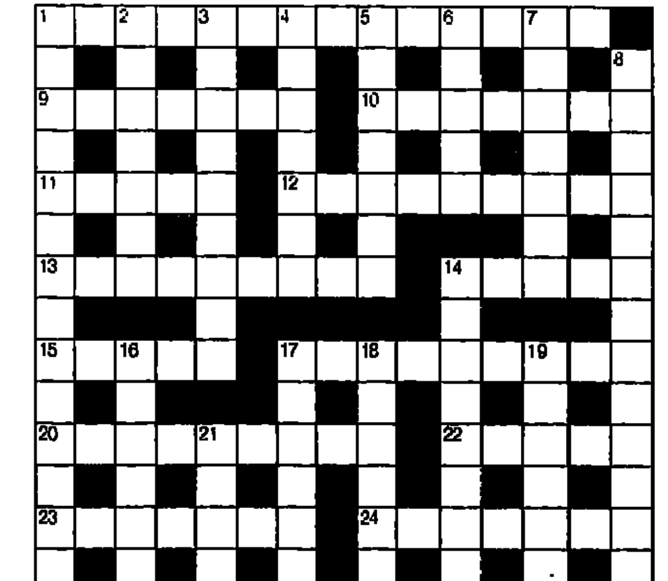
Goodway also remains popular and has the respect of his players, with the captain Farrell insisting last Saturday that they, rather than the coach, were responsible for the second-half shambles. "It was the worst 40 minutes I have ever played in," said Farrell. "We went away from the game plan and played as individuals, not as a team."

The players therefore need to do themselves justice in the third Test as a first home whitewash by the Kiwis would leave Goodway's position untenable.

Britain have the ability, as wonderful individual tries from Jason Robinson and Harris and an equally memorable try-saving tackle by Gary Connolly on Quentin Pongia showed.

It was in the forwards where Great Britain were outgunned by the Kiwi hit squad of Pongia, Stephen Kearney and Tony Puletua, who were superbly supported by the robust centre play of Ruben Wiki, allowing the scrum-half Stacey Jones and the full-back Richie Barnett, a worthy Man of the Match, to tear the Lions to shreds.

Cryptic crossword by Taupi



Across

1 Detrimental to a scruffy ragamuffin (14)
9 Seismal disturbance having no end (7)
10 Time to confine to abbey (7)
11 Back ten in plane, say, for exercise (5)
12 Fiancé's enthusiastic about returning perfume (9)
13 Verdancy's fair in fields to a point (9)
14 Lace flag (5)
15 Out of practice but reliable if given time (5)
17 Meditated on how one sees oneself (9)
20 Quick survey again and again? (5,4)
22 He's got the message (5)
23 One tipping dog (7)
24 Refuse bearer of gifts (4-3)
25 Good possibility of catching person out? (8,6)

Down

1 Unlikely relation of time to one twisting past it (10,4)
2 Tone down a finish (7)
3 Shock for student in foreign free-city (9)
4 No thanks to river rounding headland (7)
5 Flask's body containing erected craft (7)
6 Fish love jargon (5)
7 Not inside a brace if writer's twisted (7)
8 Trifling in valid position — runs into rope (14)
14 Where a river bridge might be better (9)
16 Sound pleased it's raised support for foot (7)
17 Forever sighting concealed game (7)
18 British figure out incendiary (7)
19 Giant said to be tense (7)
21 Here's to trip in Surrey (5)

Last week's solution

B	I	G	O	T	E	D		Q	U	A	R	R	E	L
R		R		U		I		U		P		A		A
A	L	E	R	T		S	T	A	M	P	E	D	E	S
N		E		T		C		K		E		I		A
C	A	N	D	I	D	A	T	E		A	M	O	N	G
H		G				R				R				N
Y	E	A	R	N		D	A	L	L	I	A	N	C	E
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I	M	P	L	I	C	A	T	E		A	P	P	L	E
C		E		C		W		R		S		E		R
H	A	N	D	S	E	L		S	H	E	E	R	L	Y